

SACHER - MASOCH
DAMEN IM PELZ

Translated by Paul Karl Moeller
as

Those Ladies in Pelts
with the translator's comments,
footnotes, and colorized images
from the original book.

Those Ladies in Pelts

with the translator's comments, footnotes, and images
colorized from the original black and white ones, plus
additional images, mostly modified, from the original book.

A translation of Sacher-Masoch's *Die Damen im Pelz: Geschichten und Novellen*

Main Titles: Herzog von Graf Font

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Footnotes : Open Sans Font

Text in Illustrations: Allura Font

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Die Damen im Pelz

Geschichten und Novellen
von
Sacher-Masoch

Illustrierte Ausgabe

Berlin W 50
Schreyer'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung

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Translator's Introduction to Sacher-Masoch's *Those Women in Pelts*

In keeping with the times that this is written, we point out that some material may be objectionable to certain religious or ethnic groups. Furthermore, there is violence against women. Because of this, and “sinful” relationships, the material is not suitable for all ages. Although only the violence is explicit – and is not a part of all stories – parental guidance may be in order.

For some reason, when the present writer was young, he was looking forward to the expiration of the copyright on an already obsolete encyclopedia. Copyright at that time lasted for only 28 years, although it could be renewed for an equal period of time. The question of terms became irrelevant until now, because at this time, a work in the translator's library was old enough to escape copyright claims under most jurisdictions. The book cannot be found on the Internet, and it has apparently never been translated. It thus created an opportunity to put something novel online. It reflects Central European society in the 19th Century, and could give insights on the personalities of both Leopold and Wanda Sacher-Masoch.

Some of the following stories were uploaded to wordpress.com. It was the translator's intention that they reflect the bad writing of the original author, although someone may accuse the present writer of having done this to an exaggerated degree.

In the following texts, many amendments have been made, because of a struggle between the desire to manifest the original clumsiness of Sacher-Masoch, and the will to show some creativity in the reworking of the original stories. Should a German version appear online, the translation will thus not always coincide.

We have opted for the Canadian version of British spelling, with emphasis on the latter. This, plus the occasional archaism, is in keeping with the plurinational Austrian style prevalent in the original German.

Very rarely, Sacher-Masoch came up with some metaphor, which may or may not have been original to her. Approximately translated verbatim from the original, one finds: “Younger stars, if not more beautiful than the previous ones, had appeared in societal skies, these outshone her . . .”, then there is the rather masculine, technical: “. . . I ask you to follow me onto the railroad tracks of life and to become my wife.” We find a character who has a friendless existence, and yet is beloved by all. Another person becomes pale, “then paler yet”; yet another, “. . . came often, and then: even more often”.

The repetition of some words is tiresome, so it was felt to be convenient to replace them by synonyms. This is particularly true of the German word “*schön(e)*” (beautiful, pretty, handsome, etc.), and its derivatives. Still, in translation, we find the word “beautiful” 114 times; “young” , 71 times; “foot” or its plural, 55 times; “rich”, 54 times; “immediately”, 48 times; “slave”, 46 times; “lips”, 39 times; “red” 32 times, including 3 hyphenated words; “cheerful”, 21 times; the substitute “handsome” for *schön*, 19 times; “malicious”, including 5 occurrences of “malicious smile”, “knee”, 15 times; 14 times; the synonym for *schön*, “good-looking”, 12 times; “decision” and “bored”, 11 times each; forms of “demonic” and the phrase, “with his eyes”, 6 times each; and “gold-sewn”, 5 times. This last mention may seem frivolous, but it shows the author's limitation in describing slippers (three times out of six; twice without any adjective) and other

apparel. One must not forget the word “fur” – a word repeated 72 times, which is, on average, 3.5 times per story. The related word “skin” is found 15 times, although if we include the human type, this increases to 21. It is seen that the animal version predominates, perhaps a metaphor of the savageness found in some of the stories.

Word play found in the following text is the translator’s contribution to brightening up the original. A more detailed analysis of Sacher-Masoch’s paucity of ideas is found in the “Afterword”.

Some of the sentences are incredibly long – which is not uncommon among German writers – but the punctuation often makes no sense. Commas abound where a semicolon might be better, and the use of the dash, if correct in the 19th Century, does not agree with modern usage.

At times, it seems that complete paragraphs are missing, but this seems to be part of the style. This gives the appearance of ideas that are *non sequiturs*.

The publisher must also be faulted. Perhaps he cruelly and correctly copied the original. A period is missing in one place; we wonder about the non-capitalization of one word; we ask ourselves if a wrong word was not written in place of a similar-sounding one. As the two “Contents” pages (German: *Inhalt*) show, the printing leaves much to be desired. This is especially true of the last entry in Part One, *Die Athalia von Zolta Reka* on page 15. Without recourse to the title elsewhere, one would have no idea what was written here.

On the basis of copyright law such as found summarized in *Wikipedia*, it is believed that the translator of the articles which follow is working with a text which is now in the public domain in all countries of the world except those which have protect the author or works after more than 70 years. In the United States, no copyright exists for works published before 1927. However, the place of publication of the book used was the German Empire, and no copyright notice was inserted into the book, except “*Alle Rechte vorbehalten*”, or “All rights reserved”, words having no legal effect, according to *Wikipedia*. Neither is there a date of publication, but the author’s foreword states, “Budapest, in February, 1881, thus giving more than 100 years after publication. [The publisher of the book in this writer’s collection is not the same as the one listed in *de.wikipedia*, where it is E. L. Morgenstern, Leipzig 1882, while here we have an undated *Schreitersche Verlagsbuchhandlung*, Berlin, undated, but with spelling that incorporates the 1901 German reforms.] The author presumably died in 1933 according to the German *Wikipedia* article (https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wanda_von_Sacher-Masoch), making 88 years since her death, although some confusing information might even make the date of death as early as 1895. That would be the year of death of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, and how would one not be confused, when, according to the Russian *Wikipedia*, both Leopold, and his wife, Wanda, simply signed their works as Sacher-Masoch, without specifying the first name? We have respected this usage in giving the authorship of the work – the confusion is their fault.

While it has not been possible to determine the date of death for the illustrator of this book, Edmund Brüning, his inclusion in our book no longer in copyright – as indicated above – and the availability of a work

in the public domain containing an illustration of his, suggest that at least in some jurisdictions, the images shown here could legitimately be reworked and copyrighted anew.¹

Wanda Sacher-Masoch: Question of Authorship

Since Leopold von Sacher-Masoch also wrote a work which included the name of Wanda von Dunajew, and since Wanda used this same name, we may perhaps be forgiven for wondering who the author of the book in our hands really was. Furthermore, both of them sometimes wrote works under their surnames only, the confusion is only compounded. Be that as it may, had click-bait been available in the late 19th Century, this couple surely had the technique down to a “T”. The book was picked up, supposing it was by that man whose fame exists chiefly through his name being the root of the word “masochism”, and not his lesser-known wife. After reading the work, this present writer was left wondering what was so sensational about this work, which *almost* seemed to be fit for children. In fact, the reader who has come to this page for anything sensational will be disappointed, the worst the book has is a few mild oaths, implied unfaithfulness of one kind or another, and one or two cruel deaths not as bad as those in current horror movies. If the Russian *Wikipedia* version of the life of this couple is correct, we can see Wanda’s life reflected in what is supposedly her book, *Die Damen im Pelz*, which we will translate as *Those Women in Pelts* – confusingly similarly named to Leopold’s *Venus in Pelz*. Even the translation of *Pelz* is a problem: the first reaction is to translate it as “fur”, but the translation “skin”, as in “sheepskin” is possible. By reading all the stories, one notes that *Pelz* is used also for any fabric with some kind of nap, but is not even limited to that. In Wanda’s introduction to her work, she refers to the poet’s “skin of Cain”, which seems to be something from her husband’s writing [his 1870 *Legacy of Cain*], for the only skins mentioned in the Bible around the time of Cain are those of his parents.

There are two additional reasons for the choice of “pelts” as a translation instead of “fur”, the translation given for *Venus in Pelz*: *Venus in Furs*. Firstly, the two words are cognates, and almost similarly pronounced: the “z” is pronounced “ts” in English, and only the “el” sounds somewhat different. The second justification is the violence implied by the word “pelt” – any softness implied by the word “fur” is applicable only to the self-indulgence of some of the jaded voluptuaries that will be met further below.

From the introduction, we get the idea that she believed in women’s liberation, or the version of that time, for we read between the lines that her idea of equality did not include the equality of classes – the wife should be of the same birth and education as the husband. In one of the stories, the heroine may be taken to be a version of the biblical Judith, in another; she has the heroine as perhaps her contemporary, Rosa Luxemburg, or perhaps the much later born Patty Hearst of the Symbionese Liberation Army fame. However, the female characters may be both from the peasant class as from anything in-between, up to royalty. All but the former are often depicted as suffering boredom, and without exception, all the stories mention “furs” in

¹ “Die Ermordung Gustavus II. von Schweden am 17. März 1792” in *Die Gartenlaube: Illustriertes Familienblatt*, [Leipzig: Ernst Keil, 1892], pp. 88, 89: books.google.com/books?id=FQa5bmIC-dwC&pg=PA89.

the extended sense mentioned above, the concept of “beauty”, including the masculine version “handsomeness”, or their adjectives. The depiction of Wanda found in *Wikipedia* shows a woman dressed in fur, perhaps best described by the latter adjective than the former.² Wanda seems to be historically aware, as our footnotes may suggest. We find, especially with reference to Poland (at that time part of the German Confederation), that her description matches parts of Heinrich Heine’s *Über Polen* (“On Poland”). With the economic means at her disposal (which impoverished her husband, and had to do with the eventual divorce), she may well have read Leopold’s works. In fact, she must have read at least some of them, for not only do some of her stories’ *dramatis personae* have the same names as found in writings allegedly penned by her husband, but ideas are shared, such as laying at a woman’s feet, and embracing her knees; and the expression: “I want to be your slave”.

To some degree, elements from Wanda’s personal life are reflected in one or more of the following stories, especially in “Barbara Pagadin”, where footnote 180 (page 168) refers to a recent republication of her memoirs. For some reason it is copyrighted, perhaps because of updated spelling.

Wanda was acquainted with at least some work by Shakespeare – this she shows in her mention of Titania of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in “The Latest Scandal in High Society”. She was the niece of Gustav Rümelin, who had written studies on Shakespeare.* When one reads Heinrich Heine’s “[Shakespeare’s Maidens and Women](#)”, we become aware that Wanda did not create cruel women out of thin air – Shakespeare depicted some of these; and the Roman Empire had its share – a few of whom were material for the Bard’s plays.

So, let us stop wondering about the real author of the work, or take it for granted that the author was Leopold’s first (and later, divorced) wife, and let her writing speak for itself.

The Foreword to Those Women in Pelts: Stories and Novelettes, Part One

Translator’s Introduction

An unusual feature of the book in our possession is that it is written in two parts, and the page numbers in the second part begin anew. However, there is no introduction to the second part, and there is no reason to believe that these segments were ever published separately. This “Foreword” speaks for itself. Nevertheless, unless otherwise noted, the statements which are supposedly factual have not been confirmed as true.

² upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e0/Wanda_von_Sacher-Masoch_1879_Eigner.png

* Aurora von Sacher-Masoch, *Echter Hermelin. Geschichten aus der vornehmen Welt, “Vorwort”*, [Bern & Leipzig, Georg Froben & Cie., 1879], p. iv, books.google.com/books?id=DGwQxiO_ZN4C&pg=PR4; accessed February 10, 2022. Angelika Aurora Rümelin was the original name of the author.

Foreword

Recently, Alexander Dumas has asked for the enfranchisement of women, and made the following noteworthy declaration: In ten years women will vote, will be voted, and will make laws.

For the time being, the declaration sounds bizarre. Women are still far off from giving men laws; they have just begun to fight for equality with their male counterparts. Nonetheless, it is not necessary to allow for the appearance of the same nebulous figures found in antiquity – such as of the Amazons, Semiramis and Zenobia – in order to prove the drive and ability of women to not only fight for and insist on their freedom, but also to wrench to themselves their domination over men.

The government of the Czarina Catherine the Second in Russia can be referred to without exaggeration as an upside-down world, a complete regiment of women. [This] brilliant woman wore the Czarist ermine and thanks to her, Russia had conquered more, made more important conquest in matters of culture,³ and greater internal reforms than any other monarch; for it was she, who more than a hundred years ago, had attempted to give the Russians a constitution.

A second, no less mentally-gifted woman was the Princess Dachkoff, at that time president of the Academy of Sciences.⁴ Women stepped forward in all walks of public life, and even led regiments and fought as officers in the same.⁵

The present time shows us strivings and struggles in all fields, the aims of which are to wrest for women the same rights that men have, and to guarantee these. In America, England and France, women are striving energetically for the right to vote. In America, Russia, and Germany, a large number of women have dedicated themselves to the study of the sciences, and in both of the first two countries, a considerable number of female doctors of medicine are already found; while in America, additionally, women are also active as lawyers, judges, preachers, and professors; in most civilized countries, females have already been allowed in the postal and telegraphic services.⁶ In our days, women in Russia are playing an outstanding role

³ some evidence was found to show that woman contributed to culture at the time of Catherine the Great

⁴ An impressive list of her achievements, under the spelling Vorontsova-Dashkova, is found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yekaterina_Vorontsova-Dashkova.

⁵ "At the commencement of the revolution, princess Dashkoff had, like Catharine, put on the uniform of the guards, and marched at their head. ... All the recompense she asked was the title of colonel of the regiment of Préobajensky, but Catharine answered her, with an ironical smile, that the academy would suit her better than a military corps." [Jean-Henri Castéra, *The Life of Catharine II, Empress of Russia: With Seven Portraits Elegantly Engraved, and a Correct Map of the Russian Empire, Volume 1*, 3rd ed., [London: T.N. Longman, and O. Rees, 1799], p. 325; accessed at: <https://books.google.com/books?id=c7IKAAAYAAJ&pg=PA325>, with search term "Princess Dachkoff", access date: 20211218.

⁶ *Wikipedia* gives lawyers as early as 1648, but no judges until 1870 if justices of the peace are included; otherwise the first woman judge appeared in 1894 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_first_women_lawyers_and_judges_in_the_United_States. The first

in the nihilistic revolution; not long ago in the United States, a delegation of esteemed men proposed a noble and spirited woman for the presidency.⁷ It is not entirely unlikely that in the future the relationship of the sexes will be completely reversed, and that women will, in every respect, rule both openly and legally; for in fact, and behind the curtains, women already govern, and in this wise, the talk should be about the emancipation of males rather than females.

**Das gesetzlich von allen Rechten des Mannes
ausgeschlossene, durch Sitte und Vorurteile unter-
jochte Weib ist dessen geheime Feindin und sucht
sich, durch List und Verstellungskünste unterstützt, an
demselben zu rächen. Ist dieses Weib aber von
Natur herrschsüchtig und besitzt es Geist, Thatkraft
und körperliche Reize, so wird es leicht zur Tyrannin
des Mannes, die ihn ohne Bedenken ihrer Selbst-
sucht dienstbar macht und nicht selten ohne Erbarmen
mißhandelt und zu Grunde richtet.**

The woman who is legally excluded from all the rights of men, subjugated by custom and prejudice, becomes man's enemy, and seeks to avenge herself through wiles and disguise. Should this woman be domineering, and possess spirit, drive, and attraction, she will easily become a tyrant of man; she, without any consideration of her egoism will make him serve her, and often abuse him mercilessly and bring him to ruin.

**Das Attribut dieses grausamen Frauentypus
ist dem Dichter das Vermächtnis Kains: der Pelz.**

**Wenn man denselben als Symbol der Herrschaft
auffaßt, ist dies unstreitig mehr als eine Dichter-Kaprixe,
und in diesem Sinne nenne ich mein Buch, welches
eine Reihe Frauen dieser selbstsüchtigen, despotischen
und grausamen Art vorführt: Die Damen im Pelz.**

woman preacher was Olivia Brown, in 1869: <https://connecticuthistory.org/americas-first-ordained-woman-minister-olympia-brown-and-bridgeports-universalist-church/> . Professors were found in 1864 and 1865, the latter an African-American: <https://bust.com/feminism/6733-a-dose-of-herstory-15-of-the-first-female-professors.html>. More research may reveal even earlier dates than these.

⁷ This probably refers to Victoria Woodhull, a woman somewhat in the mould of Wanda Sacher-Masoch, in the opinion of the present writer. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Woodhull#Presidential_candidate.

To the poet, the attribute of the horrible type of woman is Cain's legacy: fur.⁸ If one considers this as the symbol of domination, then it is without argument more than a poet's whim, and it is in this sense that I name my book, which presents a series of egotistical, despotic, and cruel women: *Those Women in Pelts*.

I am convinced that Pharisees will find something to criticize in it, but I will not on that account err in the conviction that our social conditions will not be improved by their hypocritical veiling of these, but only by honestly and directly discussing and revealing them.

Only when a woman is equally entitled in every respect and on the same footing in education will she be a true, honest and valiant partner in the struggle for existence.

Budapest, in February of 1881.

Wanda von Sacher-Masoch

Ich bin darauf gefaßt, daß die Pharisäer manches an demselben zu tadeln finden werden, aber ich werde deshalb doch nicht irre an der Überzeugung, daß unsere sozialen Zustände nicht dadurch gebessert werden können, wenn man sie heuchlerisch verhüllt, sondern nur, indem man sie ehrlich und rücksichtslos erörtert und bloßlegt.

Nur das dem Manne in jeder Beziehung gleich berechnete und an Bildung ebenbürtige Weib wird dessen treue, ehrliche und mutige Gefährtin im Kampfe um das Dasein sein.

Budapest, im Februar 1881.

Wanda von Sacher-Masoch

⁸ What exactly is meant here is not clear: biblically, Cain is not mentioned with fur, perhaps she is referring to her husband's unfinished *Legacy of Cain*, which included *Venus in Furs*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopold_von_Sacher-Masoch#Selected_bibliography. A reference was found to his book in Julian Emberly, *The Cultural Politics of Fur*, [Ithaca, University of Cornell Press, 1997], p. 88: found 20211218 at https://books.google.com/books?id=Cg4G_sOJlzsC&pg=PA84&lpg=PA84 or try https://books.google.com/books?id=Cg4G_sOJlzsC&pg=PA88&lpg=PA88. Refer to the last paragraph, beginning, "The figure of Wanda ...".

Erster Teil

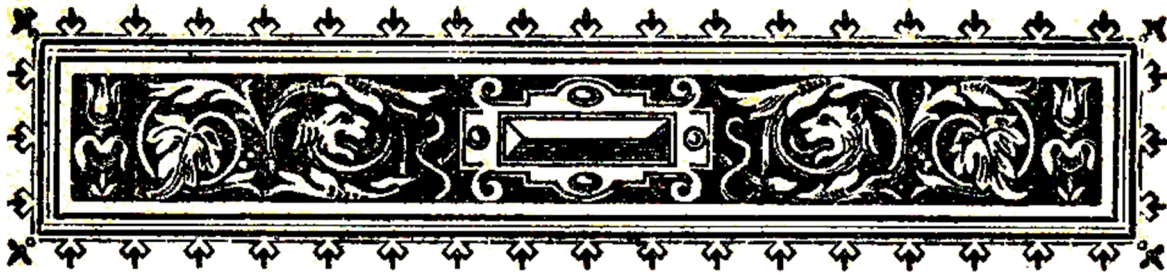
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Druck: Ernst Bittsack's Erben, Berlin C. 19.

Part 1



The Animal Tamer

Translator's Introduction

It is unfortunate for the English-speaking world, that unlike in German, or the Romance languages, there are no feminine equivalents of occupations usually considered masculine. In the present case, this is of importance, because the reader should immediately be aware of the fact that the animal tamer in the following tale is a woman.

This is one of the very few articles which have given search engine results: one was in Italian, but attributes the work to Leopold von Sacher-Masoch.⁹ The truth or falsity of such authorship has been discussed in the "Translator's Introduction" on page 6. No result has yet been found in German, which may help to substantiate the translator's low opinion of the original stories.

One sentence of the original was so illogical, that it was recast so that it would make sense. The original text has a gentleman leaving the menagerie, when he should be there.

⁹ *Racconti Galiziani*, by Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, Greenbooks editore, 2016; with the Italian text found at: books.google.com/books?id=Pxx-DAAAQBAJ&pg=PT313 A slightly different translation, also in Italian, has been found in *L'Illustrazione popolare*, Volume 20, [Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1884], books.google.com/books?id=B80aAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA582 This translation simply names the author as Sacher-Masoch, and the date suggests what would possibly have been a copyright violation in the year of publication, 3 years after the book in this translator's possession. A defective reading from a newspaper, in English, is found as "Henna, the Lion Tamer. A Story of High Life in the Capital of Wallachia Twenty Years Ago." in *Amador Ledger-Dispatch*, Volume XXVII, Number 15, 4 February 1882, through *California Digital Newspaper Collection, Center for Bibliographic Studies and Research, University of California, Riverside*, <<http://cdnc.ucr.edu>>. No author is given here. The same title is found in: "Newspaper of *Omaha Daily Bee*", January 17, 1881, Page 3, www.gastearsivi.com/en/gazete/omaha_daily_bee/1881-01-17/3, this simply accredited to Sacher-Masoch. (All URLs accessed 5 Jan. 2022.) Without the name of the author, we find "The Lion Tamer's Revenge" in *The Dannevirke Advocate*, (New Zealand), August 16, 1905, p. 2, 3, and 6. (Accessed Jan. 6, 2022). This listing is not exhaustive.

The particular tale translated here is keeps fully with Sacher-Masoch's introductory objectives. Also, here one finds Eros and Thanatos: those news-selling items which helped the Hearst chain become important.¹⁰ These two elements, of course, were also essential to *Venus in Furs*.

One could say that the whip here makes its opening debut – it strikes no man, even though a man is struck down. It will be omitted in some of the other stories, but will come back, disciplining first, and finally inflicting terminal damage upon its victims.

The Animal Tamer

It was at the beginning of the winter of 1859 when the famous Harsberg Travelling Zoo came to Bucharest for the first time.¹¹ The entire city became excited by the incredible number of exotic beasts never seen before that time, by the beauty of the lion family, and especially by the animal trainer who performed incredible feats with these animals.

She herself was a young Swede, Herma Dalstrem – beautiful, elegant, daring – and above all, unapproachable. Of course, it was said that she was the mistress of the owner of the menagerie, but the rich boyars who stormed her with homage, only found a frosty civility and a mocking pride in return, which discouraged everyone from seeking her favour any further. She lived with the Harsberg family in the best hotel of the city, rode in the family carriage as a great lady into the menagerie, and travelled back home in the same style. There she received no visitors, and never let herself be seen alone on the streets or elsewhere. Her vestal severity and reserve stimulated the senses of the gallant gentlemen and the curiosity of everyone else even more, and the Swede was soon as popular in Bucharest as Catalani¹² and Lola Montez.¹³

¹⁰ He referred to "crime" and "sex", among other saleable points; death being included in crime. See quotepark.com/authors/william-randolph-hearst/, click on "Read more."

¹¹ Harsberg: there are two small places in Germany by that name. No reference could be found to a "Travelling Zoo" such as described in this story, "Menagerie" was the word used in German; "zoo", a dictionary translation, does not correctly describe the idea given by the author. A later reference in the text shows that the reference is to a family.

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelica_Catalani

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lola_Montez

One evening even Prince Maniasko, the favourite among the ladies of Bucharest, and who had just returned from an excursion to Paris, came to the travelling zoo. He examined the animals in the company of some friends, delighted himself with their descriptions – including that of their feeding – and finally remained standing in front of the lion cage, with a skeptical smile, in order to wait for the famed Swedish woman. Suddenly, a small door opened in the back wall of the cage: and there appeared Herma – and while standing in that doorway, she was received with frantic jubilation. She lightly stepped into the cage, smiling as she did so, and threw off – with an inimitably proud gesture – her large coat of velvet fur in which she had been covered, now revealing herself in white satin and red, ermine-lined velvet, with a whip of braided iron wire in her hands. She was tall and slender, with the noblest countenance in the world, to which her rich, gold-red hair and fresh skin-tones imparted a fascinating appeal. The prince's attention was tied to her at first sight – with increasing excitement he watched her every move, and every one of her feats. His heart throbbed as she inserted her pretty head into the dreadful jaws, and a pleasant shudder overcame him as she harangued the disobedient beasts with wild shouts, and began to belabour them with kicks, and lashes from her whip.

The Swede had barely left the cage, and Prince Maniasko stood before her and introduced himself – while she slowly slipped into her fur held by Edgar, the picture-perfect son of Harsberg – she allowed her big, blue eyes to register astonishment, indeed they fixated themselves with a sort of shock at the former's ideal, almost feminine, charming face; and did not, as was her habit, answer proudly and coldly, but with embarrassment and an indescribably pretty smile.

The prince came night after night, and Herma received him not only most courteously, but she even looked for him with a quick glance both when she entered and left the cage – and should he not be there to hand over her fur, she stomped with her feet to express her impatience. However, that was all that the prince accomplished, and the more dismissive she showed herself towards his audacious bidding, so much more demonic became his desire to completely possess this extraordinary woman.

Unexpectedly, a rival came to his assistance. One evening, Edgar, in a trembling voice said, as Herma was entering the cage, “I had thought up to this moment, that you were the beloved of my father, and have kept silent; but now I tell you, that I love you, and for that reason I will never admit that you throw yourself away on this boyar, who is already betrothed to a princess, and is only playing a sordid game with you.

When the prince came after the spectacle to look for her, she spoke to him in a barely audible voice: "Is it true that you have a fiancée?"

"It is true," replied the prince, "but as soon as you wish, that boring romance will be at an end, and I will prostrate myself at your feet as your slave."

"Oh, but you don't even love me."

"How can I prove it?"

She stared fixedly ahead. "Come one hour before midnight to the small back-door which leads to the menagerie," she then said softly, after having made a quick and daring decision.

"I shall come," was the wording of the answer.

He truly did come, and after he had left in the dark of the night for the menagerie, two soft arms embraced him, and two glowing lips pulled themselves tightly to his.

Soon almost all social circles were talking about the bizarre liaison between Maniasko with the beautiful animal tamer, and the former's father, worried about his son's future, decided to have him marry the princess Agrafine Slobuda as soon as possible, with whom there had been a promise of marriage since childhood. A stormy scene erupted between father and son, but finally, the latter submitted, and so it was that one night he did not show up at the menagerie.

This particular evening was followed by a tortuous night for Herma. For two more nights she awaited her beloved in vain; then she wrote to him, without getting any reply.

On the fourth evening Edgar, as he cloaked her with tender carefulness with the soft item of fur when she had stepped out of the cage, began: "Herma, shall I tell you why that dog does not appear?"

"Speak," she said dully, "I am ready for anything."

"He will celebrate his wedding in three days."

"You're lying."

"Why should I lie?"

“What is the name of his fiancée?”

“Princess Agravine Slobuda.”

“Is she beautiful?”

“Beautiful, young, and rich.”

Herma emitted a shrill, ugly laugh.

“Tell me that you are willing to shed a tear for me, a single tear, if I die for you,” declared Edgar, “and I will take revenge upon him for you, I will murder him”

“No, Edgar. You must not sacrifice yourself, not you”

“So is it that the fellow shall remain unpunished?”

“Certainly not,” she answered, calmly and decisively.

“Then let me kill him,” mumbled Edgar with pale, trembling lips.

“No,” stated Herma, “leave him to me.”

Edgar glanced with a trace of horror into the demonic countenance around which the red tresses comparable to fiery serpents were gamboling, and decided to keep quiet.

The next afternoon Prince Maniasko was sitting in the charming little boudoir of his fiancée, and with one of his well-formed hands rolled a cigarette for her; while the princess, with a mockingly proud smile expressed the wish to be an additional viewer of the animal tamer so admired by everyone. “How is it that you come to this notion?” asked the prince, as the cigarette betrayed a nervousness of his fine hands, and the yellow tobacco peppered onto his fingers.

“I have been told so many remarkable things about this person,” continued Agravine maliciously, “that I have put it into my head to be present at her act – and today even, in your company, prince.”

As the Swede stepped into her cage that evening, she espied Maniasko with a young and lovely lady at his side – the latter she glared at challengingly through her lorgnette. It was the princess, his fiancée. She felt it immediately, and she trembled, although only for a moment, then she began with sang-froid and dauntlessness to put on her show with the wild

beasts. As she, during a well-executed feat, stretched herself out on the back of the biggest lion while the others rested around her, the princess shouted out a loud “Bravo!” and threw her purse filled with gold into the cage. An indignant murmur ran through the rows of the onlookers. Herma began to tremble, tears welled up in her eyes, she lost control of herself and of the animals that were around her; the big lion raised its head, looked at her in amazement, and unexpectedly seized her left arm with its horrible teeth. A cry of terror rang out from hundreds of lips, but at the same moment, Herma had regained the required mastery of the situation. A glance, a word of command – and the lion had already released its arm. Now she jumped up, grabbed the unruly beast by its mane, put her foot upon it and beat it with her wiry whip until, fully subdued, it lay at her feet. Stormy applause and cheers were given to her in compensation.

“When is his wedding?” she asked Edgar, as she left the cage.

“The day after tomorrow, Herma.”

“Are you willing to hastily dispatch a letter to him, you yourself?”

“As soon as you command it.”

“I request that you do so.” Herma pressed his hand, but he in turn took hers, and covered them with kisses.

The next morning, the animal tamer wrote a letter to the prince. She just wanted to see him and talk to him one more time; she asked him to come in the evening at the usual time to the menagerie, and in exchange she promised to leave Bucharest on the day of his wedding. Edgar himself delivered the missive to the prince. He scanned it, smiled, and replied, “I will come.”

An hour before midnight the prince appeared at the back-door to the menagerie. As always, it opened quietly. By the dull light of the stars and the snow Herma appeared in a short fur coat of a snug fit, took his hand, and carefully led him into a gloomy aisle. As always, the hinges of a second door chirped squeakily;¹⁴ the animal trainer led the prince through it and then into a fully-darkened room, threw her arms around his neck, and kissed him with wild tenderness.

¹⁴ One of the few metaphors employed by the author: The original German is “*Wie sonst, sang eine zweite Thüre weinerlich in den Angeln*”, thus literally, “As always, a second door sang mournfully through its hinges.”

Then she abruptly disappeared – the door was locked with violence, and the prince bumped with his foot into some living thing, which began to move. What was that? Had she not led him, as usually, into her cloakroom?

In the next moment, a garish red light shone into the place. Herma fixed a torch onto an iron ring just outside of the lion-cage, and now, the prince was standing in the midst of the lions. He flinched. From Herma came a short, diabolical laugh as she stood arms crossed in front of her breast in front of the bars of the cage, and glanced at him with her cold blue eyes.

The prince hurriedly tried to open the door, but it was in vain.

“By Jove, Herma,” he began, imploringly, “what is it that you plan to do?”

“Today I celebrate by wedding to you, and the lions are to be my guests on this occasion.

“Are you mad?”

“I am fully sane. You have betrayed me; I have sentenced you to death. Forwards, my friends!”

She began to awaken the slumbering beasts with her whip, and to egg them on, while the prince called out for help. His cries died away unheard in a winter storm. The lions, provoked by Herma and loud cries, bounded towards him. His blood already was flowing. He begged for mercy and frantically defended himself, as she, her face pressed against the cold bars, devoted herself to his mortal agony and his suffering.

Quite a while passed before the lions had completed their work. As the prince lay stretched out on the floor of the cage, the lions cautiously drew back, and began to lick their bloody paws.

That very same night, the animal trainer disappeared from Bucharest, to be heard of never again.

January 7, 2022

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„Als der Fürst tot auf dem Boden des Käfigs
hingestreckt lag, zogen sie sich scheu zurück.“

*As the prince lay stretched out on the floor of
the cage, the lions cautiously drew back.*

How One Becomes an Archbishop

Translator's Introduction

If one reads the “Foreword” and has read the present translation, it will be seen that it did not even measure up to the pretensions of the author in showing vindictive women. Rather, it seems to present a high degree of coquettish adolescent naughtiness – in an adult – eventually leading to the benefit of all the characters in the story.

How one becomes an archbishop is not the type of story that could resonate with most people – perhaps someone among the almost half million priests, or six thousand bishops might have an idle moment to peruse how this was done in the past – but the story remains actual if we substitute, for example, the words “a cabinet minister”, or “a member of the board of directors” for “archbishop”. Perhaps there is an implication of the Peter Principle – of which the author would have known nothing; or it could be a sly comment, so formed as to avoid government reaction,¹⁵ on aristocratic society in the Austrian Empire.

How One Becomes an Archbishop

It was previous to the year 1848,¹⁶ at that time when beautiful and talented women delved into the arts, literature, and politics; protected artists and writers, and whispered grand ideas into the ears of statesmen, when the widowed Countess Sibilla, the most beautiful and brilliant of them all, the lioness of the residence, lived in her palace in Bohemia; and held one splendid feast after another while surrounded by the richest and most distinguished cavaliers of the country, who all languished under the spell of her loveliness.

On an autumn evening, which indeed was cold, but still clear and sunny, the comely mistress of the palace was awoken from her light morning slumber by the sound of horns. As she, with sweet comfort, her pretty and soft members lengthened and stretched under

¹⁵ <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-55880-6>

¹⁶ 1848 was the year of several revolutions in Europe: Sicily, Italy, France, Germany, and the Austrian Empire – what we might somewhat compare to the Color Revolutions of more recent times.

the silk covers, and the horns below her window sounded out again, yet more loudly than before, she suddenly remembered with a slight start, that she had of course invited her dear guests and neighbours to a great hunt that day – and what more – that she had promised to take part therein. At that moment, Sibilla swore to herself a holy oath that she would never again want to make a premature promise. It seemed wholly impossible for her to leave her soft, warm bed so early, and to deliver her white, tender skin up to the raw morning air.

“I won’t go,” she said decidedly, “for anything in the world,” as she, being chilly, pulled up her lace-trimmed bed cover over her full, pretty neck.

Within a few moments, Sibilla had fallen asleep again. And as the mistress in the bedroom above was beguiled by sweet dreams, guests and horses below stamped their feet and hooves impatiently; and Prince Robkowitz, perhaps the best-looking and most valiant – perhaps even the happiest of Sibilla’s pretenders, suggested going up himself to awaken the dilatory woman of the palace, and to remind her of her promise. The suggestion was met with rejoicing, and both ladies and gentlemen stormed the bedchamber of the word-breaker with cheerful laughter.

Sibilla disguised her ill-humour toward the sleep-disturbers with a charming smile. Half getting up in bed, a graceful movement of her small, tender hand removing the flood of red hair from her face and neck, she stated, with the most flattering tone of her voice:

“I cannot come along, I have sprained my foot.”

“Sprained your foot? – In bed? – impossible!” came the confused shouts.

“Indeed, I cannot ride, the least movement pains me.”

Prince Robkowitz demanded to see the wounded foot. Sibilla reddened slightly, and a china white, tinged with pink, foot of a child made an appearance. As the curious viewers wanted to touch this charming little foot, the beautiful owner of the same shouted out loudly, and swiftly it disappeared again under the covers.

For the party gathered in that place, there remained no other alternative than to go out on the hunt without the countess, and the high and mighty woman laughed like a kobold over the trick she had played.

Meanwhile, hardly had the guests gone, when the chambermaid stepped in and handed a letter to the countess.

“Who brought this missive?” asked Sibilla with curiosity, after she had read it.

“The new chaplain, who has been with the priest for eight days,” responded the girl.

“Let him enter,” ordered her mistress.

The letter contained an important, political message, and Sibilla wanted to know the man who had been made the bearer of the same.

The beautiful widow was not a little surprised as the new chaplain entered. This was not the countrified rural cleric she had been used to seeing: this was a fine, distinguished figure of a man, with a pale, noble face and large, adoring eyes.

A deep blush suffused the face of the young priest as he stepped in and looked towards the beautiful woman, who rested carelessly in her pillows. For a moment, Sibilla revelled in his embarrassment, and then she said, “The letter which you brought me requires that I immediately send a trusted person to Vienna. I am in the greatest predicament, since at the moment none of my servants are here, to whom I could have given an errand of such importance.”

“If it were in my power to do as I please,” whispered timidly the young cleric, “I would gladly undertake that errand.”

“As for that, you need not have any worry,” said the countess, “I will take full responsibility with respect to your superiors.”

“Then, please, command me as you will.”

“I just have to write a few lines previously,” said Sibilla, ringing for her chambermaid and bending gracefully over the edge of her bed, as if she were looking for something. In the manner of the great ladies of the times of the Congress,¹⁷ she was accustomed to having witnesses present during her morning routine, such as friends and admirers.

¹⁷ A reference to the Congress of Vienna, September 1814 to June 1815, see “Female “Diplomats” in Europe from 1815 to the Present”, by Julie Anne DEMEL, <https://ehne.fr/en/encyclopedia/themes/gender-and-europe/gender-citizenship-in-europe/female-%E2%80%9Cdiploamats%E2%80%9D-in-europe-1815-present> , or “Women at the Congress of Vienna”, Glenda Sluga, 28 January 2015, <https://www.eurozine.com/women-at-the-congress-of-vienna/>

The young priest immediately guessed what she wanted, quickly got down on his knees and put her gold-sewn velvet slippers onto her feet.

At this moment, the chambermaid appeared, and the chaplain retreated yet paler than when he had entered.

As the countess appeared a few minutes later covered in a short fur-lined morning wrap, and stepped into a small salon in which the young cleric was waiting for her, he almost trembled at the sight of the imposing beauty of this woman. With light, sprightly steps, her upper body swaying gracefully, she stepped towards him, and with a smile, invited him to sit next to her. Shyly he complied with her invitation, and this time the colouring of his face was a deep red, as the rustling waves of her silken peignoir brushed against his knee.

While Sibilla communicated her orders to him, her light, sharp eyes bored themselves steadily into the dark, deep ones of the cleric, who trembled by her side like a piteous victim, thoroughly captivated by these penetrating eyes. And before he went – totally at variance with his station and habits – he ardently kissed the soft, small hand which was proffered to him in farewell.

A few days later, Countess Sibilla found life in the countryside horribly dreary, and immediately gave orders that her luggage be packed, and so it was hardly 24 hours before she had again moved into her small, but charming palace in Vienna.

For this purpose, the beautiful lady had made herself up in a manner such as to exhilarate the onlooker. The new conquest had an odd piquant appeal to the distinguished, jaded lady. All the brilliant successes which she had enjoyed up to the present, and were the envy of the ladies of her same rank, now seemed utterly worthless when weighed against the admiration of this pale and timid youngster in the priestly cassock. Accustomed as she was to the frivolous nature of the time, she was immediately ready to stoke the fires, and to allow him to warm his somewhat cool heart at their flames.

After she had amiably chatted with him for an hour, and had become convinced that her interest in him was as warm as on the day that he had so gallantly helped her into her slippers, she promptly decided to bind him to Vienna.

“Would you not prefer to live in this residence?” she asked, with a look that was not to be misunderstood.

“If I could choose – certainly,” he responded with downcast eyes.

“I will take care of things such that you will find a position here,” she said, as she smilingly extended her warm hand, which he kissed in thankful bewilderment.

With the influence that this beautiful and rich widow had, it would not be difficult for her to keep her word. After only a few days, an eminent person appointed the cleric as her secretary.

As he came to the countess that same evening in order to give her thanks for the favour conceded, he was involuntarily pulled towards the feet of the beautiful woman, and out of love and happiness, dared to cover her hands with kisses.

“But – Reverend – ” warned Sibilla with an enchanting, self-contented smile. – –

Prince Robkowitz, angered at the sudden and unforeseen departure of the idolized woman, did not follow her immediately to Vienna, as he had earlier intended, but instead went to Italy for a few months. All the wonders of this land alone could not make him forget the company of this tempting and vivacious woman sparkling with wit; consequently, he unexpectedly stood present again in Sibilla’s salon one morning, not sulkily, but as an ardent admirer.

The countess, at first so charmed by the silent adoration which the timid cleric offered, nevertheless had become bored in the long run by this wordless crush; and although she still was good to the handsome young man, and enjoyed having him around her, yet she greeted the return of the elegant, knightly prince with silent joy. With a cheerful smile she extended her hand to the recent arrival, and he, delighted to find her so gracious, and overcome by the long-missed sight of her beauty, used the happy moment forthwith – he got down on his knees and asked her, as a sign of forgiveness, to accept his heart and soul. Sibilla, who with feminine perspicacity had long seen this coming and had made her decision, accepted the offering gladly, while she extended to him her full lips, and a few days later they celebrated their engagement by holding a splendid ball.

Now the circumstances were such that the prince visited the house of his betrothed more often than before, and thus it could not remain a secret that the young, good-looking cleric whom he met more often than he would have liked, was at least as dear to his beloved as he was, and thus, he, a man of rash decision, requested Sibilla – making no bones about his jealousy – to put an end to the almost daily visits of the pale admirer.

The countess broke out in rollicking laughter, the prince's jealousy amused her immensely.

"Find a means to remove him, I have no objection," she said, still laughing.

"The means is found," countered the prince, "I have on one of my possessions in Moravia a lucrative benefice to bestow – he may be my priest."

As the countess shared this happy turn of his fate with her quiet admirer, he submitted with speechless resignation.

Several years passed. The exhausting life at the city residence had debilitated the health of the countess; doctors had advised the peace and quiet of a stay in the country. The prince led his ailing wife to his Bohemian palace which lay deep in quiet wooded lonesomeness. The countess, delighted by the splendid surroundings, made frequent outings therein. Thus one day she came to its quiet rectory, and found her friend of more cheerful days there. With heartfelt cordiality¹⁸ she extended her hand, which the surprised cleric held onto for a moment. Sibilla invited the priest insistently to come to the palace. He came – and soon it was daily – to play chess with her.

The old jealousy awoke in the heart of the prince. However, this time he was ashamed to confess this to his wife. In secret, he decided to get his rival out of the way. With his riches and his influence, his plan had to succeed. Only a few weeks passed before the priest was called to the cathedral chapter¹⁹ in Prague.

When the new canon had departed from the palace, Sibilla turned with ironic sympathy to her spouse: "If things continue like this, your jealousy will soon make an archbishop of the good man."

"Probably not in the near future," replied he, and flatteringly took her hand, "but if you promise me never more to have to do with him on a personal basis, he should have achieved this goal in a number of years."

¹⁸ "warme Herzlichkeit": the adjective is redundant to the noun. The translator house found justification in older writings for his choice of words; cf. *The Letters of Robert Burns Chronologically Arranged from Dr. Currie's Collection, Vol. I* [London: John Sharp, 1819], p. 129 (top), seen at <https://books.google.com/books?id=k10mAAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA129#v=onepage&q&f=false> (which did not load upon testing, but compare: *The Great Conspiracy, An Address Delivered 4th July 1861* by John Jay, 2nd Ed., [New York: A. D. F. Randolph, 1863], p. 34 (9th line, flush left), accessed at: books.google.com/books?id=CRgfWPJaysgC&pg=PA34. Other old sources are available with a search for "heartfelt cordiality" in books.google.com.

¹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathedral_chapter

“Sibilla gave the promise willingly, and the prince kept his word. The quiet village chaplain, through his spirit, erudition, and generosity, became a well-known archbishop in a relatively few years.

December 23, 2021

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Notes:

Websites in footnotes 15 and 17 were accessed December 22, 2021, while 18 and 19 were accessed December 23, 2021.

Lady Asta’s Secret

Translator’s Introduction

The original title of the present translation was “*Das Geheimnis der Barina Asta*”. “*Barina*” is a bit difficult to translate, as it has no exact English counterpart, but it does imply nobility, and “Lady” is a correct translation, not in the British sense, but in a similar vein.²⁰

Death, in this tale, is for one of the men almost the equivalent of what it was in “The Animal Tamer”, but under some legal systems, the crime is worse.²¹ This time, the lady of the story is not scorned, but unhappy – except for a brief period of her life. If it did not unfold so woodenly, it could have been a psychological or moral tale, but except for a single metaphor, it is a mere exposition of fictional events.

This tale was interesting for the translator not so much for the content, but by the fact that the invented names did not show up in web searches, with one exception.

It is also worth noting that here we find a method of eliminating inconvenient persons from society, which was later used in the Soviet Union: “psychiatric” hospitals.

²⁰ The definition of “lady” we accept is the one in the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* referring to a feudal superior. The Pocket Oxford Russian – English Dictionary includes as a translation of the masculine form of the word *барин* as *barin*. Other entries under the word are not useful. “Lord” would be a useful, but ambiguous translation, as it again does not correspond to the British usage.

²¹ In Argentina, there exists *Homicidio agravado por el vínculo*: Homicide considered aggravated because of a blood or marriage relationship with the victim.

The spelling of Lagetschnikoff has been changed to Lagetchnikov, and Ladujeff to Laduyev.

Lady Asta's Secret

Everything seems to have withered, to be dead. There is nothing but the immense steppe of eternal peace and quiet. As far as the eye can see, there is no motion, no sound; neither the voice of man nor the sounds of beasts are able to be perceived; and softly, very softly, the tall grass of the steppes sways in a gentle breeze. After one has wandered for hours, there rises a small point on the horizon – then a second – then a third – and finally, there looms a large, imposing palace – a true fairy-tale castle. But here too there is no movement, all around it there is a numbing, unearthly stillness.

Only sometimes after hot, sultry summer days, when the full moon is at its zenith, does a tall, pale woman, cold and stony-faced appear in the doorway of the palace and mount a horse held ready for her by a trembling old man. With a quick, energetic, almost manly movement, she swings herself into the saddle. Hardly does the animal feel its burden, and it is already jumping with wild leaps out of the gateway and into the fragrant and dewy steppe grass. Or in winter, when deep snow lies in the vast region, there resounds a soft, almost whining tone of a bell on a small, fully-lined with bearskins sleigh, which moves silently on the roadway. In it, we again find, although wrapped in a dark fur, the woman with the wide-eyed, cold gaze; and she herself is driving, with her powerful hands on the reins.

And yet, Barina Asta, the mistress of the fairy palace, was once the most celebrated of all women in Moscow. Young, beautiful, rich, and of distinguished birth, she once held sway over the salons of high society, and gave herself full-heartedly to the boisterous pleasures of her luxurious life, while she was admired and envied by all those who were around her. Then, one day, Herr von Lagetchnikov,²² her husband, lost a considerable part of his fortune. In order to replace what was lost, he moved, together with his young, boisterous pleasure-loving wife into the country, and all the brilliance of before was now at an end.

²² This name seems to have been borrowed from Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's *Russische Hofgeschichten*, II. Band, [Leipzig: Ernst Julius Günther, 1873], p. 38, books.google.com/books?id=-u9bAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA38, a double volume gives the name at books.google.com/books?id=mbIFAAAAQAAJ&pg=RA1-PA67 (Bern: Georg Froben & Cie., 1877, p. 67).

As long as Asta had lived among high society, rushing from one roaring good time to another, no one had dared to call her reputation into question – she was considered by all to have been both a happily-married and faithful spouse – and even her friends had to admit this. Things went differently out in the country. Asta was exceedingly bored. Only at this moment did this married couple get to know each other, now that they were left to themselves, and the woman discovered that her husband had peculiarities that she had not in the least noticed previously, and which absolutely did not please her at all.

Now she had time to sincerely consult her heart, and found that she had married Lagetschnikoff completely without any love for him. The result of this discovery was that Asta very often rode to the neighbouring manors; and in spite of her husband's diminished resources, she had costumes come from Paris, and arranged balls and garden parties which consumed tremendous amounts of money.

Her spouse, whose sincere love for her had not in the least decreased in the country, made remonstrations – which of course did not help any, but only served as occasions for very unedifying scenes. It was thus that a year went by. Asta hated her husband, and saw it as a grievous injustice that her youth and beauty were becoming buried out in the steppes.

One day she drove into a neighbouring courtyard to Lady Laduyev, and stayed there for three days. Lagetchnikov, who had long been given to suspicions about the behaviour of his wife, now watched her keenly, and as she again returned to her friend, he followed her. He went with no coachman, and just in case, he carried two pistols on his person.

It was a true Russian winter's night – icy cold – but the air was pure and clear, the sky full of twinkling stars, as Lagetchnikov's sleigh glided noiselessly over the massive plain of snow.

Not far from the court was a tavern,²³ and here he dismounted, and went along the wall of the park towards the entrance,²⁴ in order to remain unseen as the returning woman passed by.

A somewhat amusing three-horse carriage merrily skipped along to this place, and stopped at the gate. A man sprang out of the carriage, the sheath of his sabre gleamed in

²³ The ethnicity of the owner of the tavern has been suppressed as both unnecessary and potentially offensive.

²⁴ No other reference is made to a park. It must be supposed that the park is part of a noble's property, and that the tavern is on or beside the same.

the moon-light, and then he helped a lady get out. Lagetchnikov gnashed his teeth in anger. It was Asta – he recognized her through her red-velvet sable fur and her majestic figure. The two from the carriage said their good-byes in a manner which left the eavesdropper with no doubts as to their mutual relations. As Asta opened the gate, her lover drove off – and as she wanted to watch him do so, Lagetchnikov suddenly appeared in front of her.

A soft cry escaped from her lips.

“Silence,” commanded the cuckolded husband, “or I shall kill you on the spot.”

She kept quiet, but anger and hate drove the blood to her heart, and set it throbbing. Without exchanging any more words with her, he dragged her along the road up to the tavern. Roughly he shoved her into the sleigh. Asta hit him in the face, but he merely laughed.

With a hand of iron, he pressed her down into the seat, while with the other, he held the reins.

Thus they went along for a mile, and then the horses began to get restless.

Individual shiny points appeared in the distance, and came closer and closer.

These were wolves, so Lagetchnikov grabbed his pistols as he spoke to encourage his horses. However, the beasts were very close. The barin did not want to waste ammunition, so he stood in the sleigh and whipped his shying animals in the hope that he could make it through. In vain. With every passing second, the wolves – an entire pack of them – came closer. Nothing remained to be done, except to fire off a few shots at them.

Lagetchnikov turned around, in order to shoot directly at an intended target, but Asta got up at the same time from her seat; her eyes even more blood-thirsty than those of the wolves, and before her husband could pull the trigger, she had knocked him lightning-fast out of the sleigh with a mighty fist.



Colorization and Translation
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„— stieß sie ihn blitzschnell mit kräftiger Faust aus dem Schlitten“.

“...with a mighty fist she knocked him lightning-fast

out of the sleigh”

Translation © 2022, Paul Karl Moeller

A cry of anger resounded into the night; two shots rang out: the wolves stayed back and the horses became quiet.

Without looking around for a moment, Asta drove off in haste to her palace. When she arrived there, she immediately ordered her people to prepare to look for her husband, who, she claimed, had had an accident. She herself retired to her bedroom. As she came out of it the next morning, fresh and rosy such as she had not been in a long time, she was informed that only the boots and some scraps of clothing of the barin were to be found. The pretty woman veiled her eyes and again retired to her bedroom, where she immediately wrote to her modiste to have mourning clothes made.

One year later she married Captain Telesphor Babarin, who had already, shortly after the death of the barin, had left his military service and had, since that time, dedicated himself assiduously to comforting the widow – a task in which he finally succeeded.

The couple spent the first few years travelling, and then lived in Moscow or Petersburg,²⁵ but Asta no longer found high society life as pleasant as before. Younger stars, if not more beautiful than the previous ones, had appeared in societal skies: these outshone her; and so, her feelings hurt, she retired to her palace on the steppes.

However, she did not find the happiness which she had looked for in the entire civilized world here either. Her spouse treated her with the utmost love and tenderness, but he only rarely managed to conjure up a smile from her lips. Dark shadows furrowed her beautiful brow more and more, and her previously life-loving glance became something rigid and dry. Eventually it had to become clear to Telesphor that his wife suffered in silence. One evening after tea, as Asta, dressed in a fur-lined dressing gown, was sitting absent-mindedly in front of the fireplace and staring at the flames, he took her by the hand and asked her what caused her melancholy.

For a moment she looked at him as if she had understood nothing of what he had said, then a deathly pallor came over her face – she quickly turned away and stared into the fireplace again. But he insisted. He knelt down to her feet on the bearskin, passionately embraced her knees, and requested in a moving tone of voice, “Asta, tell me what is bothering you, so that I can share your pain with you; or is it that you no longer love me?”

²⁵ Presently St. Petersburg. The verb “lived” was added, otherwise the sentence did not make sense.

She looked at him sharply. A bold decision expressed itself on her tired face. "Is your heart then strong enough to hear something terrible and to keep quiet about it?" she asked. "Then I will tell you, that I have just loved you too much."

"Whatever it may be, just say it, and I will help you carry your grief," he said, looking full of love at her eyes.

"So then, listen!" she said, nervously holding his hand. "Lagetchnikov did not have an accident; I myself threw him to the wolves."

Telesphor heard this, paralyzed with terror. He could not believe this inhuman thing, but it had to be true, he saw this beautiful woman wither under the burden of this horrible secret.

From this moment on, he was seized with an unearthly horror at the sight of his wife, so in fear he avoided her. Asta sensed this, and on account of his weakness, an unspeakable disdain now manifested itself in place of her earlier love. Now Telesphor was rarely at home, for days and even weeks he spent his time at the homes of the neighbouring nobles. One day Asta noticed that he had come home drunk. Now she trembled lest the secret not remain so. How easily he could betray it under the influence of alcohol! She quickly came to a decision. She wrote a long and flattering letter to the director of an asylum for the insane in the vicinity of Moscow, Dr. Wertagrin; and bade him come and visit her.

This man, whose skills were more infamous than renown, came immediately upon receiving the invitation. Asta received him most courteously and informed him with a serious expression that she believed her husband to be mad, because he had this fixed idea which threatened to be very dangerous to her if he was not committed immediately.

With stirring words she related the terrible accident to which her husband had fallen victim; and that Telesphor now thought that it was she who had killed him.

The specialist, who liked the still beautiful woman, and who had experience in such matters, asked to see the sick man. Asta had to arrange matters so that Wertagrin could one day stay at the palace under a believable pretext in order to watch the sufferer – no easy task, as he was rarely at home. Finally, however, he managed to see and speak to the husband of the beautiful lady.

“Your lord husband is not sick,” said the doctor emphatically, “but this should not hinder me from obliging you,” he added. She extended her hand to him, which Wertagrin kissed passionately.

Asta blushed. She had not meant it like this. He misunderstood her blushing, and drew intimately nearer to her. She mentioned a considerable sum for the care of her husband, and hoped by this means to save herself from the attentions of the doctor. He, however, was more clever than she; he took the money and at the same time let her know that she was the most beautiful woman that he had ever known. Fear, pride, and shame fought within her. The admiration of this man, and the intention behind it, angered her high-handed tastes, but yet she should not refuse if her plan was to succeed. But what was even more terrible: he had seen through her secret.

Asta resigned herself to the inevitable.

Wertagrin had two servants with him – experienced wardens. Both were hidden in Asta’s boudoir, when she had her husband called to her for a conversation.

Telesphor Babarin came somewhat embarrassed into his wife’s room, but as he saw her in the company of him who had already been presented as an insurance agent the first time he had come, his discomfiture disappeared and he approached her without inhibitions.

Asta was deathly pale, and could not avoid the clattering of her teeth. Telesphor looked at her in shock. “You’re cold,” he said, standing up, and quickly getting her fur coat which was on the arm-rest of a chair. As he gallantly helped her into it, she gestured to the doctor. Immediately, the wardens sprang out of their hiding places onto Telesphor. Before he even properly had become aware of what was happening to him, they had him in a strait-jacket. Fear and horror robbed him for a moment of his speech, but before he could find it again, he was gagged. With an unspeakable sad look at his heartless wife he departed. Asta was at the window as they led him away, cold, unconcerned and unfeeling she watched the wagon go off, and this was the lifeless expression that she kept for evermore.

Since that time, she avoided people, and it is only rarely that one sees her on a wild steed racing through the steps; or, if it is winter, flying over the snow-covered fields in a light sleigh.

January 8, 2022

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The Ice Queen

Translator's Introduction

The original title of the present story was, “*Die Eiskönigin*”, or literally: “The Ice Queen”. It is perhaps the most innocent of those presented in the book. The reader may be disappointed to know that here the lead character is not one such as to have been cursed with Hamlet to Ophelia’s “Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow”²⁶, there is not the least hint of a pathology, other than perhaps to an activity indulged in with the same fanaticism as one displays by not being able to escape from one’s computer and the Internet.

The reader is also forewarned not to expect other than escapist entertainment. The writing style is often too elemental. The opening sentence is a parallel construction to the *Peanuts* comic strips “It was a dark and stormy night”.²⁷ While the sentence has, or had its defenders, its inclusion in many may have the reader associate the wording with the simplicity of that cartoon. The present translator does not have the duty to beautify the original, and when he did, and then it was with reluctance, in order to keep the original style in the foreground as much as possible.

The Ice Queen

It was an early and bitterly cold winter. Already in mid-November the Vltava²⁸ was frozen solid. Huge posters invited the inhabitants of Prague to the opening of the ice-skating venue. Anybody who was young, beautiful, and elegant – or who wanted to be – hurried to accept the invitation, and at noon the mirror-smooth surface of the frozen Vltava was already teeming with graceful ice-skaters in costumes as sumptuous as lovely, who together with their escorts carried out the most extraordinary step sequences and moves in

²⁶ Modernized spelling from the copyright-free *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: Vol. iv: Hamlet*. 1877, Horace Howard Furness, ed., [Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Company, 1877], p. 57, last line, as seen in books.google.com/books?id=JiAuAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Hamlet+Shakespeare&hl=es&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiXpdvG2_z0AhXLq5UCHT7QBZ0Q6AF6BAglEAI#v=onepage&q=chaste&f=false. This work uses the spelling “Ofelia”.

²⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/It_was_a_dark_and_stormy_night

²⁸ In German: *Moldau*, cf. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vltava>

the field.²⁹ Wooden benches had been placed around this skating area;³⁰ upon these sat the older ladies, wrapped in heavy furs, who watched the graceful spectacle.

Suddenly, in the midst of this cheerful activity, most of the attention was diverted towards a sleigh which had just arrived. Both the vehicle and its occupant merited such attention. From the sleigh, pulled by four milk-white horses and completely lined with white fox-skins, alighted a pale young woman, entirely dressed in the same colour. Quickly and sure-footedly she descended the few steps, followed by a servant who, after she had taken her place, deferentially kneeling in front of the pale woman, buckled up her ice-skates. The lady, who seemed entirely oblivious to the fact that all eyes were upon her, cast off her fur coat; and after testing to see if the skates were tight enough with a quick movement of her foot, flew to the flat surface as lightly and surely as a white dove through the marvelling crowd.

Who is this stranger? This was the thought going from mouth to mouth, but no one could answer this question.

A group of young men, whose curiosity was stronger than their sense of decency, surrounded her immediately, frantically occupied in trying to obtain a glance under the thick veil which covered half of the face of the strange woman. But it was impossible, for she remained still for not even a moment, and that which in the beginning was curiosity, now became enthusiasm. The movements of the woman were of such grace, daring, and confidence, that she aroused general admiration. One was astonished at her as with an accomplished artist, her muscles seemed to be of iron, for she executed the most difficult moves so tirelessly, that some of the younger skaters retreated in shame. For about an hour this stranger stayed upon the ice; then she gestured to her servant, let the skates be removed, the coat wrapped around her, and then leapt lightly and gracefully into the waiting sleigh. The silvery sounds of the sleigh bells tinkled, the horses began pulling, and the sleigh shot off like an arrow, and in an instant they disappeared from the view of the goggling crowd, as if a vision from another world.

And so it was, day after day. Without paying attention to anybody, she stayed on the ice for an hour and often even more; and she succeeded every day more, against her

²⁹ Technical vocabulary found at <https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/sports-figure-skating.htm>

³⁰ One hesitates to say "rink", as the first recording one, according to *Wikipedia*, was opened in 1876, a second reference is to 1879, and a third to 1882. Considering the year in which the story was written, it would be inappropriate to think of an ice-rink: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ice_rink

will, to thrill the society there gathered with wonder and admiration – and to increase curiosity to the highest level. Finally its acme was reached. There were people who spent all day going through the city to ferret out the beautiful secret.

The “Ice Queen”, as one now dubbed the white-clad skater, lived in the finest hotel in Prague. The hotel-owner was stormed daily by the curious, and betrayed what he wanted to betray.

Vlasta von Boskowitz was the widow of a rich patrician, who, since the death of her spouse lived in the country apart from the entire world, and existed with a sole passion – skating. In the winter she spent almost the whole day on the pond in her park, while in the summer she was on roller-skates in a large salon of her old palace. This particular winter she came to the city – perhaps she wanted to have an audience for her skills, or it might have been because the springs which provided her pond with water had been practically dried up through their diversion by a neighbouring industrial undertaking.

Enough. That much is what the hotel-owner where *Frau* von Boskowitz lived was able to say. What he did not know, however, is that Vlasta, the daughter of one of Austria’s colonels who had fallen in the year 1866³¹ had left this fiery dark-eyed girl with her unconquerable desire for luxury, fully orphaned in the world at the age of sixteen, vainly looking around for the joys and pleasures of this world. Instead of the happiness which her phantasies presented to her, came troubles and grief. Thus one day she stood red-eyed and pale-cheeked in an employment office. Thanks to her little knowledge of French and piano-playing, the old Boskowitz took her into his abode, to be company for his sick daughter. The wealth and abundance of this house satisfied Vlasta quite well, only her position did not please her. On the other hand, to live as the mistress of these splendid rooms seemed to her an immense stroke of good luck, and as the ailing child died after a year, and the old Boskowitz made the proposal that she remain and be his bride, she accepted with a rejoicing heart.

For five years Vlasta lived with her husband, and during these five years, she had developed into a luxuriantly beautiful woman from the small and simple girl she had been. However, in the five-year marriage her heart had hardened and her phantasies dried up – her only joy was ice-skating; after her spouse had died, she dedicated her entire time to this

³¹ This would be the Austro-Prussian, or Seven-Weeks War.

pleasure in which she obtained such skillfulness, that all who saw her were astounded and excited, as now, the elegant world of Prague.

One day, an elegant hussar³² rittmeister,³³ the dark, true son of the Puszta,³⁴ appeared on the ice, and the attention and admiration which had up until now been devoted exclusively to Vlasta, was from this point on divided equally between them. The handsome man executed pirouettes that were for her, the woman, totally impossible – which aroused her envy as well as her interest. She was spellbound and dazzled, and made eager attempts to arouse the attention of the intrepid skater. She achieved what she wanted immediately, perhaps less as a consequence of her skill than because of her beauty, which was as dazzling, but also as cold as that of the winter sun which shone upon her. It required merely a cheery look out of the dark eyes of Vlasta, and the rittmeister manoeuvred so skillfully, that the two slightly bumped into one another immediately. Of course, he had to apologize and introduce himself, and thus the acquaintanceship was established. As of that time, the two of them were only seen together upon the ice. When the white sleigh of the beautiful *Frau* von Boskowitz had hardly appeared off to one side; on the other side bounded the fiery black steed of the rittmeister, and even before the servant had time to proffer his hand to his mistress, the good-looking hussar stood by the sleigh, and slightly supporting herself on his arm, Vlasta sprang easily and elegantly from her conveyance.

As often as the pair made its appearance at the skating area, a sort of commotion occurred among those present. “What will they do today?” one asked himself. And indeed, there was no day that the onlookers were not surprised by new step sequences and moves in the field. Through the daring and confidence of her partner, Vlasta developed her talent to such skillfulness that she herself was filled with delight and thankfulness. What she had not had dared to hope for in her wildest dreams, she had learned in play with the rittmeister. It was also natural that he himself should interest himself in his pupil, and perhaps more for the woman than for the skater. As one day, when he came to the hotel to pick her up for the skating place, and found her in tears, he put his arm around her waist, and with tenderness, asked what the cause of her tears was. With sobs, she pointed with her small, rosy fingers at the calendar, which was opened up in front of her.

“What should I do?” asked the rittmeister, who did not understand her.

³² Hussar: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hussar>

³³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rittmeister>

³⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pannonian_Steppe#Name

Any web-page cited for this story was accessed December 24, 2021.

“The hours we share are counted,” said Vlasta, drying her tears forcefully, “tomorrow we already have to go our separate ways.”

“How’s that?” asked the startled rittmeister.

“Then just read,” she said, still with her hand on the calendar. It stated, “After the 18th of February sudden thawing.” But the companion still looked at her with astonishment, he still did not comprehend.

“Don’t you understand,” she cried impatiently, “tomorrow is the 18th of February, and ice-thawing temperatures begin?”

“Then why are you crying today already, when the thaw does not take place until tomorrow?” he asked, laughing.

She angrily turned her back to him. “So it is completely all the same to you,” she stated, “if you can skate with me or not.”

“It is so little indifferent to me,” replied the rittmeister, that I ask you to follow me onto the railroad tracks of life and to become my wife.”

Vlasta, smiled at him forgivingly. “Under one condition,” she said.

“Which is?”

“That we celebrate our wedding upon the ice.”

Delighted, he kissed her fresh lips, and cheerfully and happily the betrothed rode off to the skating area.

This time, the sky was so courteous as to give no consideration to what the calendar prophesied; it continued to send the betrothed couple the frosty cold which was necessary for their happiness.

In a few weeks, the wedding took place. Vlasta had made herself up for the occasion in a charming manner of that soft, white stuff that appears to be downy snow, and clinging so softly to one’s body. She wore a little Russian cap of the same material on her head.

She awaited her bridegroom upon the ice. As he appeared, she made a wonderful movement upon the frozen surface; paused in the middle, and then followed the handsome

hussar to the altar. Nevertheless, from the church they returned immediately to the ice, in order to finish the move begun only shortly before.

December 24, 2021

Translation © 2021 Paul Karl Moeller.

The Old Monk

Translator's Introduction

A story by the name of “The Old Monk” [original title in German, *Der Alte Mönch*] may not resonate with many of today’s readers, but that is to miss a few points: sneaking in a bit of religion into 19th Century texts is like putting anything that the mass market of today likes into a film or book. The Sacher-Masoch name is hardly associated with piety. Because this text has not been translated into English up to this time, and it might elicit a certain amount of curiosity.

The original spelling of “Torgoß” has been changed to “Torgoss” in order to facilitate readability.

This is hardly a fine work of literature. In some ways though, it echoes Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* – as a story – not in its excellence. As will be seen later in the story, “Lady Tarnavka”, the English playwright was known to Sacher-Masoch.

The Old Monk

It was a warm, star-bright summer night as an old monk silently opened the small door which led through the thick wall into the garden, closed it again once he was through, and then, with almost noiseless steps upon the soft, yellow sand, walked through the blooming alley of acacias located in a monastery in the vicinity of the Carpathian Mountains. His posture was one of a person bent forward, and his steps were weary and unsteady. A long, white beard covered almost the entirety of his sunken chest. His balding pate was covered by a small cap which sheltered his head from the night air, perhaps his face was once of good factions, but now it was sunken and full of wrinkles.

Only his big, blue eyes remained pleasing, from these were seen profound melancholy, boundless love for mankind, and a painful, hopeless yearning. With relish, he breathed in the floral fragrance which rose up all around, and from time to time he lovingly stroked a just-blossomed rose which was found on the pathway.

Like mad little lights, glowing fireflies fluttered around him and clung to his coarse habit and his long beard, so that he looked as if he were covered with sparkling diamonds.

He walked further and further, towards a hill which towered over the walls of the monastery at the end of the garden. That hill provided on the one side a view of the vast expanse of land, and on the other, a breathtaking view of the Carpathians.

When he was still young and strong, he had prepared himself a place to rest, and he had gone there for more than forty years when the remembrance of long-forgotten things frightened sleep away from his tired eyes. And here, in quiet loneliness, in the midst of Nature, surrounded by the rustling of eternal beauty and perpetual secrets, his boiling blood and longing heart found quiet and the strength for new austerities and pains.

Today was another day in which images which disturbed and frightened him arose within him, and which had driven the life-weary old man from his cell out into the open under the star-studded sky.

But even today it was not for him to find rest there. The sweet, melancholy sobbing of the nightingale unlocked tears from the old monk's eyes; these rolled into his white beard and remained hanging there, as if they were dewdrops, and brought to him the memory of a short-lived happiness and a profound pain that had never been relieved.³⁵

Slowly he placed one trembling hand into the other, lifted his moistened eyes up to the heavens, and mumbled in his dried-up lips: "Is there a second encounter?"³⁶

³⁵ This is where the translator was reminded of Heine, "[... I see the sickly face of a monk, and read in it such sorrows as hide under a coarse cowl; aggravated love, p. 376, ... a pale, sorrowful priest, bearing in his thin, quivering bony hands ... his anxious, bald pate, and who weak as he himself was on the legs, still held up ... the old priest, whose steps seemed growing weaker and readier to fall." Heinrich Heine's *Pictures of Travel* 9th ed., Heinrich Heine Schaefer & Koradi, 1889, trans. Charles Godfrey Leland. For convenience, see one of the following links: books.google.com/books?id=xKJBAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA264 or books.google.com/books?id=GtG8p9U6QHQC&pg=PA376. Original German text, p. 352, beginning: "*gekränkte Liebe*": *Heinrich Heine's Sämtliche Werke*, Zweiter Band, Hrsg. Otto F. Lachmann [Leipzig, Philipp Reclam jun.] n.d.

³⁶ Edited quote, to prevent using name of Deity in vain.

As if in answer to the uneasy question, a star unloosed itself from the heavens and pulled a long, glowing tail behind itself, directly over the monk's hill, and then it disappeared between the mountains.

With fixed eyes had the old man looked at this manifestation, and then a soft smile appeared over his withered features. "I shall see you again, Emanuela, he murmured happily, "God himself has answered my question."

Now he became quieter, and invoked even the shadows for the reunion for which he had prayed to God so often on his knees in long, inconsolable hours. He laid his old head on the hard armrests of the bench, and closed his eyes. Images of his childhood and youthful years danced before him. Of all the figures which conjured themselves up before him, there was only one he could hold fast in his mind – the sweet, pretty appearance of a girl, who in aspect was half child and half adolescent,³⁷ but in her mind and feelings was already a complete woman.

When he was eighteen, he had come out of Budapest to his parents' home during the holidays. His father, proud of the student singled out as gifted by all his professors, triumphantly led him from one neighbour to another. Thus they also came to Baron Nyareny. The proud magnate and his wife Ethel were not at home, so the two were received by their daughter, Emanuela. The young girl of hardly fifteen understood how to play the role of the mistress of the house with such charm and grace, that Pál Torgoss, the shy, unassuming student, hardly dared to look at her. While his father chatted with her, and asked about her family, her beauty enchained Pál's heart. But Emanuela also liked the mild, blond youngster with the large, idolizing, blue eyes, and when they had been there more than an hour, she so cordially invited the two men to visit again, that Pál blushed with joy and plucked up the courage to kiss her little hand which she had raised to him in farewell.

He came often, and then: even more often. Emanuela's father, Baron Nyareny - an aristocrat who had become impoverished through his spendthrift ways, and thus all the more haughty - hardly paid attention to Pál, the son of a lesser nobleman. The young man came and went without it occurring to anyone to attach any significance to his visits. It was thus that soon a relationship as tender as it was innocent developed between the two young people. Emanuela loved Pál vehemently and passionately, while the latter, with his milder

³⁷ The word used in German literally translates as "virgin", which is not compatible with the preceding adjective.

but deeper nature dedicated himself to her with enthusiastic adoration.³⁸ By and by, the young enthusiast aroused the interest of the beautiful and frivolous Ethel, Emanuela's stepmother, and so it once happened, that in the absence of the magnate and his daughter, she led Pál into her boudoir, stretched out on a daybed and covered in a luxuriant sheepskin which rather more revealed than concealed her charms, attempted to make Pál the slave of her passion. He, however, resisted, and as of that time, Ethel had a burning hatred for the lad.

When autumn came and Pál had to return to the city again, the girl led her beloved to the grave of her dear unforgettable mother, and there he had to swear an oath of everlasting loyalty; while the girl likewise vowed to be only his. Not until midnight did the blossom-beautiful children leave the grave of the deceased, arm-in-arm, and as they went beyond the exterior walls of the cemetery, she pressed her first kiss upon his lips.³⁹ They remained in one another's arms for a long time, he sobbed quietly, but she was firm, looked at him deeply for a long time – into his eyes – and then pressed his hand upon her heart and softly touched his forehead with her lips before departing.

Almost a year passed before the lovers saw one another again. From time to time, they exchanged letters full of love and loyalty. Just shortly before Pál had to return home again, Emanuela wrote him that her father intended to have her marry a rich magnate, who, however, was no longer very young. "Fear not," she added, I will never become the wife of another; I will remain true to my oath. My mother's spirit will protect me."

Nevertheless, Pál could hardly wait for the day of his departure. Excited and fearful he came home, and trembling he awaited the hour in which he could greet her.

As the young man, this time without the presence of his father, presented himself again to Nyareny, the latter became astounded at the changes which had occurred in the former. This was no longer the young fellow that had hardly been worth his consideration in the previous year – he had become a man, the childish dreaminess in his manner had given way to deep earnestness, and his behaviour revealed a certain self-confidence which both took the baron by surprise and impressed him. He immediately saw the danger there

³⁸ The text, for the word here translated by "enthusiastic", has a misprint, *schmärmerisch*.

³⁹ Within a very short space, this story shares the above words with Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*: flowers, walls, kisses; and as has been mentioned through the step-mother, (and will soon be mentioned through the father) an antipathy of one family towards the other: *Romeo and Juliet*, books.google.com/books?id=alROAAAYAAJ&pg=PA816

could be by his daughter's associating with the handsome lad, and modified his behaviour towards the young man in such a way so that his spirits would become so deflated that he would no longer return.

Emanuela, who was present, became indignant at the cold feelings of her father towards her beloved, and decided to indemnify the latter. As he left, she followed him by an indirect route, and as he went through the woods, to the site where they had earlier encountered one another so often, and where their paths now had to cross, she met him. With a cry of joyful surprise, he embraced the beloved girl in his arms. How happy he was to be able to tell her now, how much more beautiful she had become since the last time he had seen her, and how his love for her had grown during the long separation. With a kiss, Emanuela closed his mouth; then they spoke of their future. Pál became sad, and let his head sink. Years still had to pass, before he could think of bringing his beloved home with him, and all his spirit left him at the thought at what storms and temptations would beset them during this long span of time. But Emanuela laughed in his face. She was full of confidence and joyful hope. "Just love me always," she said, "and that will give me the strength to withstand anything."

Pál kissed her hand, but he was not put at ease. How could he even believe that the gentle girl could defy the despotic will of her father over an extended period of time? Yet to keep her feelings from being hurt, he concealed this doubt, and with a cheerful smile he dismissed himself once the farewells were spoken.

The lovers saw one another daily in the woods, and thus enjoyed a quiet but blissful happiness for several weeks. Only over Pál's countenance would a shadow occasionally appear, which quickly vanished in the presence of his beloved, but returned when he was alone – and then his gentle, soft features took on an expression of hopelessness. A gloomy foreboding seemed to frighten the heart of the youngster, and to curtail the joy in his happiness.

One day Baron Nyareny went to look for his daughter in order to speak to her earnestly about marriage with the rich magnate, as she alone was now in a position to help the baron up again from his miserable financial circumstances. The girl had until now decidedly avoided obedience to her father's will, to which Nyareny originally yielded in order to break her from her obstinacy so much the more surely thereafter. There had been no more talk about the matter for months, but an urgent letter from the suitor, which

demanding a decision, today forced the father to again to take up the subject, and to get her to agree.

Emanuela was not in her room; neither was she in the garden. Nyareny knew her preferred spots and strode with Ethel in his arm, out of the garden and into the woods. But she was not here either; however, since he had already gone this far, he decided to take a stroll through the entire grove in order to inspect whatever was newly planted.

In the middle of the woods he met Misko, the guard of the woods and fields, carrying a flintlock on his shoulder. Misko was a mean, wild fellow, the worst tough in the village and feared by all. Because of this bad reputation, Baron Nyareny had taken him as his field guard, and thus it truly happened that since the dreaded Misko kept watch there, no crop or wood thieves, nor poachers, were found on the baron's properties.

As the guard saw the baron approach, he gave a sign that the latter should stay still, and instead, snuck quietly beside him. The eyes of the tough fellow gleamed with maliciousness and evil joy. He pressed a finger to his lips, and bade the landowner to follow him. Nyareny was of the impression that Misko must have discovered an interesting wild animal, and followed him silently and with care. Misko led him to a dense grove, behind which there was to be found a small clearing which offered a pleasant view; cautiously he bent the small branches apart and showed the baron Pál and Emanuela, engaging in sweet conversation while sitting fondly beside one another on the other side of that area.

Nyareny wanted to pounce upon the pair, but Misko held him back, and gently bent back to branches to their original position.

“If only the young lady were not there – !” he said, and blinked with his eyes.

The baron understood him; and entirely unnecessarily to this understanding, Ethel, filled with the desire for revenge, whispered a few additionally infuriating words into his ear. “You’re only doing your duty,” he replied to the guard, “he is on my property. Come with me, I will give you my gun – it is more trustworthy – and if you hit the target well, it is yours.”

Misko's ugly face broadened with joy as he contemplated receiving the baron's flintlock; quickly he followed his master.

Never had Emanuela appeared to be so beautiful and charming to Pál as today, time and again he pulled her hand to his lips and covered it with kisses; the girl laughed and was as cheerful and lively as never before.

“I don’t know how it is, Pál,” she said, “that today I have so much courage that I would most like to step before my father and ask him to bless our love; certainly he would not refuse me.”

Pál looked at her, so proud and high-spirited she stood before him, as if the whole world had to bend before her will, but once again that sad, frightful fear crept upon him and oppressed his heart, but he overcame this, and made an effort to share the gladness.

Hours fled by, then the noon-day bell struck in the village. Emanuela got up, in order to rush home. She jumped up, and suddenly saw, behind Pál, the gleam of the barrel of a gun. Swiftly she threw herself in front of her beloved, a shot rang out, and the pretty girl lay in her blood. —

Several months after Pál had recovered from a severe illness, he retired to a monastery.

More than forty years had now passed, but the memory of Emanuela had never burned out within his faithful heart. With the passage of the years, the hurt of his lost beloved had become milder, but in compensation the yearning for a reunion after death became all the stronger, and it was only this meagre hope which gave the heart-broken man the strength to bear his lonely, friendless existence.

With these memories, the old monk fell into a deep sleep. In the morning, as the bells rang for prayer, he did not appear in the church. It was believed that he was ill, but since his cell was empty, and his bedclothes apparently unslept in; he was anxiously sought in the courtyard and in the garden, and in the end found in his favourite spot, quietly slumbering and wet from dew. Carefully the old man, beloved by all, was carried to his cell. Here he opened his eyes once again, smiled thankfully at the bystanders, and closed his eyes, now nevermore to have them see the light of day.

December 27, 2021

Translation © 2021 by Paul Karl Moeller

Notes: *The net-based references of this article were accessed on December 27, 2021*

The Latest Scandal in High Society

Translator's Note

This is a translation of “*Der neueste Skandal in der High Life*”, with “high life” printed in English in the original text. It may be imagined that the Sacher-Masoch’s were well-aware of such shenanigans as described in this tale; one of the better ones as far as plot goes. It has no violence other than verbal – and not much of that, but it shows that for those who believe that the grass is always greener on the other side, it may well be preferable to stay within one’s own pastures. The straying bull of this story, at one point depicted as another animal, although considering himself experienced, ended up showing himself to be a green-horn. Many women will probably delight at his downfall; modern women would have had him pay heavily for his fault.



The Latest Scandal in High Society

The house was packed, all the boxes were filled, and with eager expectation the select public awaited the raising of the curtains. A famous singer was to be on stage for the last time today, and anyone who took any interest in the arts had obtained admission to the

Rendezvous Theatre. The beautiful, and the most beautiful women of the city had appeared without exception, and their attention was intended as much for the great artist as for any good-looking man. A rustling and crackling noise went through the auditorium, and many soft hands were busy in arranging all the shiny silk and satin billows which were responsible for those sounds.

Shortly before the beginning of the show, Countess Alma appeared in her box and right away all opera glasses were directed towards her. The beautiful woman, however, was not in the least disturbed by this. On the contrary, as soon as she was aware of being watched, she displayed even more gracefulness and beauty in her movements. She belonged to that group of women which had to have public attention in order to work all her magic; and Countess Alma would surely not find for a long time a larger and more distinguished public as that which was present today.

After she had removed her heavy fur coat and had put on her white swan-lined mantle over her classical shoulders, she sat down in her fauteuil, now to take her own turn at examining the public.

In the company of the countess was found one of those ladies who are indispensable for any beauty, “a friend for every occasion”.

Slowly and nonchalantly, the dark eyes of the elegant lady went from one box to another. Nothing seemed to merit her interest, or – was there something? There was one moment when it appeared as if her glance wanted to rest upon the blond locks of the beautiful lady who sat facing her on the other side of the auditorium, behind whose chair a gentleman was standing, and whom Alma watched with feverish interest – and whose face now became had flushed with a passionate red just before the countess’s gaze glided over to the woman at his side.⁴⁰

But the attention of the countess did not even remain there; for in the next moment, she gave a casually friendly nod to someone she knew, and who had greeted her from a neighbouring box.

At that moment, the curtain went up with a rustling sound, and the public’s interest centred itself exclusively on the proscenium. Only that man who was standing behind the

⁴⁰ Based on the context, this appears to be the woman whom he had been standing behind.

blond lady paid not the slightest attention to the curtain of that stage, for his passionate glance seemed to want to fixate itself upon Alma's charming features.

After the first act, Alma, indicating with her eyes the box of her admirer, asked her companion, "Who is that lady in the pink dress?"

"That is Richardine Schönbach," she replied, "you ought to know her."

"But of course!" said Alma meditatively, "I thought that a similarity had deceived me. But my, she has become more beautiful, much more."

"It seems that Richardine no longer recognizes you, Countess."

"But that's perfectly natural. Even I have changed a lot in over ten years. Recognized her only on account of her splendid ginger locks, which only she knows how to have so well coiffured.⁴¹ And who is that man behind her?"

"Her husband."

"Poor Richardine!" Alma seemed to say this suggestively, but her companion did not understand and looked at her with astonishment. "Is Richardine happy in her marriage?" the countess asked.

"So it is believed," the other woman answered.

And perhaps she too believes it," murmured Alma, casting a solicitous glance at her playmate. "Richardine was my trusted friend at boarding-school," she said, "then we became separated over some trivial matter – you know how it is – and since we have left school, we have never seen one another again."

The beginning of the second act interrupted the conversation. Countess Alma no longer remained indifferent, many a sincere glance did she direct over to her friend.

Herr von Schönbach, Richardine's husband, evidently believed that he had finally managed to get the attention of the woman he was admiring. A joyful agitation was mirrored in his pretty, but otherwise insignificant face.

It did not escape Alma's keen eye in what a pleasant error she now found herself in vis-à-vis the other woman; then, for a moment, and irritatingly malicious smile brightened

⁴¹ A literal translation of a sentence without a subject – rather unusual usage.

her rouged and powdered face. She seemed to have made a decision, and to be looking forward to carrying out the plan she had made.

After the performance, both women met in the foyer of the theatre. Frau von Schönbach cast a curiosity-filled glance at Alma, in the exact manner that one would look at a complete stranger, but nothing in her look betrayed that she had the least idea who the beautiful and interesting woman could be. Alma became aware of this with satisfaction, and before she could even climb into her carriage, an ardent and encouraging look of her proud eyes went to the husband of her former friend.

It caused Herr Sigismund von Schönbach little trouble to be introduced into Alma's house.⁴² A friend, who was almost as much in love with the countess as he himself, introduced him, secretly delighting in the expected defeat of that "pretty Sigismund", as the latter was known within his circle of friends.

As it usually goes, the reverse of what the malicious good friend had expected is what actually happened. Countess Alma favoured him in a totally incomprehensible way, above all other admirers. To let off a bit of steam, these scorned admirers had a picture circulated which depicted Titania with the donkey.⁴³ The Queen of Elves had Alma's attractive features, and everyone knew who the ass was. Of course, steps were taken such that the picture was also seen by Alma. But, instead of becoming angry and displeased, the beautiful Queen of Elves broke out into cheerful laughter. She confiscated the caricature, framed it, and set it up in her bedroom.

Continues on page after illustration of Titania.

⁴² This unexpected change of scene, from theatre to domicile, has been described as typical of the author's style.

⁴³ A reference to Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act IV, Scene i. The accompanying image of Titania and the donkey is a cropped version of one found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Edwin_Landseer_-_Scene_from_A_Midsummer_Night%27s_Dream._Titania_and_Bottom_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg, where the copyright status shown as "Public Domain".



[Shakespeare's Titania depicted by Edwin Landseer in his 1851 painting Scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – more in footnote below.]

The pretty Sigismund was her lover. Nobody except he was totally unclear on this point; he, who was envied by everyone. The countess permitted him a lot, a whole lot; but for his great passion that was still not enough. He wanted to possess her completely, to call her totally his own, and so finally decided to make a declaration to her. For this particular occasion, he had his valet make him up as elegantly as possible. After he had taken a look into a mirror following this great and serious preparation, he smiled complacently, sure of his success. “She would be no woman,” said he, conscious of his good looks, “if she could resist this man.” A thankful glance met his mirrored image.

And that is how things turned out.

Alma did not resist – not at all. The proudly celebrated beauty gave in without battle, indeed it almost seemed as if she had been waiting with impatience for this moment; and although Herr von Schönbach absolutely had not doubted his power, he was

nevertheless somewhat surprised by this easy and speedy conquest. “That’s how women are,” he thought, “a man just has to seriously will it, and then every woman is his.”

“And so, you are mine, completely mine?” he asked while kissing, one after another, her fine, beautiful, white fingers, “I can always see you, and do so without witnesses?”

“Certainly not, my dear,” replied the countess, and her lips creased themselves into a smile which could have been interpreted either as enchanting or as mischievous, “the condition which I tie to my love, is that we no longer see one another so often.”

“By asking that, you make me very unhappy, Alma,” replied Herr von Schönbach.

“I will compensate you for that,” said the countess, getting up, taking a key out of her secretary desk, and extending it to her admirer. “This key locks the garden from the side of the street; only through the garden can you get to my room completely unobserved. If I want to receive you, I will let you know, but then you must not come before midnight, when everyone in the house is asleep, and you must ensure that my servants do not hear your footsteps.”

“I’ll take my shoes off in the garden,” declared Herr von Schönbach, intoxicated by the delightful prospect which Alma’s favour opened up to him.

“That’s not enough, my dearest,” Alma added, “I demand even greater sacrifice of your love.”

“Ask for my entire life,” cried out Herr von Schönbach, filled with enthusiasm, “Everything, but absolutely everything, belongs to you.”

“Too much, my love, far too much,” spoke Alma, laughingly. “I only ask that during our encounters you will remain speechless, that you say not a single word, and that you not even ask of me that I speak to you, for only that way can I receive you without incurring any danger. The unfortunate location of my room demands this. To the right of mine, is the bedroom of my mother, and to the left, that of my chambermaid. The least noise will awaken both of them and give us the deadliest of embarrassments. You can see that you must accept my conditions, if you do not want to renounce my love entirely.”

“How can you doubt it? Through your favour, you make me the happiest of men,” said the thrilled admirer, devouring the beautiful woman with his eyes.

Weeks passed by. Herr von Schönbach was repeatedly granted the good fortune of being able to use the key to the garden. Firmly he kept to the conditions which the countess had set for him. No sound escaped from his lips, and she too, the idolized one, was unwaveringly quiet. In exchange, she was, however, more devoted and tender. Herr von Schönbach luxuriated in the ecstasy of delight. The love of this woman made a happiness flow around him which he would not have dared to hope for in his wildest dreams, and that he had considered no woman of being able to grant. Only with a greedy desirous shudder did he think of the hours spent at her side, and with fearful worried trembling he waited for the next ones, which would lead him anew into her arms.

One day he again received a small, gentle, fragrantly-scented love-letter, which asked him to come for the night to Alma. When the hours came, he snuck with quiet, inaudible⁴⁴ steps and a loudly beating heart into the room of the beloved. Today she was even more passionate and breath-taking than ever. Intoxicated, he lay at her feet, passionately embracing her knees so that the fur-lined satin of her dressing-gown crackled and rustled, as if he were incensed at the unholy fire that his mistress had kindled. It was only with effort by the tempting woman that he was calmed for a moment, and then she pressed her warm, fragrant lips to his ears to whisper, “Sigismund, do you really love me so much?”

“Oh, frantically, and beyond what is human. I don’t know how I can bear it, the nameless delight,” he answered equally quietly, happy that he could finally give words to his passion.

“Could you bring me a victim?” the whisper continued.

“Ask for whatever you wish,” he replied, placing her foot upon his knee, “my life belongs to you.”

“And your wife, your children?” Tenderly she put her arms around his neck.

“I only live for you. I am fully at your service.”

“Don’t you love Richardine? She is good and beautiful. Is it not said that you married her for love?” A restrained quiver was in the whisper which spoke these words.

⁴⁴ Redundancy found in the original text.

“Yes, but that was long ago,” he answered somewhat impatiently. “Now I only love you, you alone!”

““And why do you love me instead of your wife?” she continued.

“Because you are beautiful, a thousand times more beautiful than Richardine, and because you understand how to love, as no other woman does. What is Richardine’s customary tenderness against the ecstatic passion that you are able to offer? You are Venus herself, and love is your kingdom!” He continued to hold her in an embrace, but she repulsed him.

“Well,” she said, “therefore separate yourself from your wife and your children, to belong entirely to me.”

“You have asked for it – and may it be so,” he replied in a steady voice, and again attempted to draw her to him, but a small but powerful fist shoved him back.

At this moment the gentle sound of a bell rang out. The door opened, and the Countess Alma stepped in, holding a candle in her hand.

Herr von Schönbach stared at her in surprise, and only then did he look at the woman whom he had held so ecstatically in his arms – and found himself looking at – his wife.

“You’re surprised, my lord husband,” said Richardine, and it was only with effort that the words came from her rage-paled lips. “You are surprised that it was I who gave you that much in love. Thank your friend for this sweet error, just as I thank her for having opened my eyes about the merits of the man whom until now I had respected and loved, and who is the father of my children.” Sobs choked up her voice, but quickly she overcame her emotion, and continued, “You will understand that I can no longer return to your house in order to bother you with my conventional tenderness. Since it was so easy for you to sacrifice your wife and your children for a blinding passion, I no longer need to pay the least heed to you. As of this moment, we are fully separated.”

Herr von Schönbach tried to placate his wife, but a proud and energetic motion of her hand toward the door left him with no more doubt as to Richardine’s sentiments. He left. With a mocking laugh, Alma lit the way down the stairs for him.

Since then, months have passed by, and the high society can boast of one more separated couple.

January 10-11, 2022

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The Titled Turkish Lady, or the Begum

Translator's Note

The original German title to this story is “*Die Begin*”, but that word is not found in any of the translator's dictionaries. It would have been the suffixed form of “*beg*”, where “in” is the equivalent of “ess” in English words such as lioness, or tigress; in German we have, for example, *Löwin*, for the former, *Kaiserin* for empress, and *Prinzessin* for princess.

The bey, or beg was a commander or local governor in Turkey and Egypt. The correct feminine form of the title was finally found as “begum”. She would probably be the wife, although *Wikipedia* allows that the term could also be used for a daughter. The word is still used now in the sense of Mrs., but this is not appropriate to the following story.

It ends with a scene of considerable cruelty such as has allegedly been used by the Turks in a genocide of which they are accused; however, a picture on the Internet showing a mass event of such an act has been determined to have been taken from a 1915 silent movie.⁴⁵

Unlike the passionate lover in the previous story, this one is lazy; but like his predecessor, he didn't recognize a good thing while he had it. However, as a not very desirable person, his just reward had him punished far beyond the pain of losing a woman's love. As such, this story may be considered the second in the Sacher-Masoch book which fulfills the objectives described in its “Foreword”.

⁴⁵ See last footnote of this article. According to the source quoted there, the cruelty used during the Armenian Genocide, denied by Turkey, and not recognized by a majority of countries – though by all major Western ones, excluding Great Britain and Spain (at the time of this writing) – was even worse.

The Titled Turkish Lady, or the Begum

In the tiny Serbian village of Bielina⁴⁶ upon the Drina⁴⁷, Stanko Brankovics⁴⁸ and his wife Micleta were the most beautiful couple that could ever be seen. He was uncommonly tall, but of good proportions. His gait and bearing had something distinguished and proud about it. His deep brown skin colour, bright eyes, as well as his full red and sensuous mouth and his cheerful, always contented and carefree ways made him the darling of all the women and girls.

Micleta, his wife, was of an entirely different beauty. Barely of average height, slender, and of delicate build, and she had a fairy-like quality about her. Her long, dark brown hair wound itself around the fine head in heavy braids, and this highlighted the already pale white face even more. Unlike him, she was always serious, almost sad.

Stanko Brankovics had loved her passionately when she became his wife. At that time, Micleta had just turned fifteen. Since then, ten years had passed, and the glow of his feeling had cooled off considerably. Now he preferred a good glass of wine to a kiss from the lips of his wife. He had already begun to look upon her as just another useful domestic animal, and to treat her as such. Micleta bore this with resignation; she could hardly count on anything better; but her pretty blue eyes became more and more serious, and even more sad.

One day, Pelagovics, a neighbour of the lovely married couple, stepped into the tiny house they owned. Stanko lay stretched out on a bench while smoking, and at the same time Micleta sat humbly by the window and mended his clothes.

“Come along,” called the visitor to his friend, who was lazily stretching himself on the bench, “there is work to be done.”

“Leave me alone,” replied Stanko angrily, “I’m tired of slaving for nothing.”

⁴⁶ Bijeljina, Republika Srpska.

⁴⁷ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drina>. Note, at the top of this map, the proximity of Bijeljina to the river: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drina#/media/File:Drina.png>

⁴⁸ Not to be confused with any person of the same or similar name. As of the date of this writing, no results were for Brankovics together with Micleta in a web search, irrelevant results abounded.

Pelagovics burst out laughing raucously. “When have you ever slaved, doesn’t your woman manage your entire household?” he asked.

“Of course she does that; should I perhaps also bother about it?” Ill-humoured, Stanko got up from the bench.

“If I were such a fine-looking fellow as you,” said the friend with a wary glance at Micleta, “I would also know how to earn money without working.”

“What would you do, then?” asked Stanko with curiosity.

“I would go over the border to Bosnia, where there’s a rich begum, a widow, who pays well for good-looking slaves. Once you get the purchase price, you take off again,” said Pelagovics.

“But I just can’t go and sell myself,” opined Stanko thoughtfully.

“We’ll share the reward and do the business together,” replied Pelagovics. “We’ll cross the Drina there where the border is; then I’ll tie you up and bring you to the begum.

“Who, of course, is a hideous old hag,” shouted Stanko angrily. “Go find some other matey for your business.”

Pelagovics laughed, while Micleta pressed her hand to her heart and looked uneasily at her husband. “The begum is young and beautiful,” said the visitor, “you need not be ashamed.”

Stanko thought about it and finally declared himself to be in agreement with the affair. Micleta left the room noiselessly, and now the men discussed their plan thoroughly.

It was a beautiful and mild starlit night as they crossed over the river in a boat to get to Bosnia. On the bank of the other side, Stanko let his hands be tied up, Pelagovics held one end of the rope in his hand, and then walked along the estate of the widow, which was just over the border.

Schohda Kapitanovics,⁴⁹ the begum, completely wrapped in a white burnoose, and a white veil which only allowed a view of the soft, sensuous glance of two languishing eyes,

⁴⁹ Strangely, this name sounds Slavic, and could then only have validity in the Turkish context, if she had married a bey, and could keep her maiden name, or be known by it.

examined the slave offered to her for purchase, and immediately accepted the uncommonly high price asked for him. With the money in his pocket, Pelagovics hurried back home.

That very same night an old woman took Stanko out of his bedding-down place and brought him before her mistress. The latter sat cross-legged on silken cushions, a kaftan of costly Turkish material lined with grey Siberian squirrel hid part of her body, but kept the full round arms and the voluptuous breast completely free.⁵⁰ Stanko Brankovics remained standing – amazed. The begum was truly beautiful and still quite young; and although her beauty was more to the Oriental taste, he did not regret having made himself her slave.

He was even less sorry, as Schohda very graciously beckoned him to come closer, and explained without ceremony that she loved him, that he could be glad about her possession, and that it would not occur to her to use him, as the other slaves, for heavy work. That was completely to Stanko's taste, and he adapted himself easily into his new position.

For months, the two of them led a luxurious life. Schohda did not even treat him as a slave in the presence of her other slaves and servants, but as a favourite, and he devoted himself with full delight to this *dolce far niente*. But as time went by, he finally felt bored by the sameness⁵¹ of this life of comfort, and yearned once more for his freedom. This longing increased with every passing day, and eventually became so strong that he could no longer resist – and so he made his escape.

Micleta received her spouse without recriminations, but also without joy. Stanko got upset over her indifference, and in order to irritate her, he related to her how well it had gone during the past few months, and how beautiful the begum was. She pressed her lips together, but made no reply. He looked for the money Pelagovics must have delivered to her. She indicated the wall-closet. He found the money there in its entirety, she had not touched it; through tireless, hard work she had made ends meet.

So now there were rollicking days for Stanko. As long as the money lasted, he never came home at night, but his funds did not last long, and soon he again sat peevishly in his room. If he had had no desire to work in the past, now, after the high style of living to which he had been accustomed with the begum, now work was completely out of the

⁵⁰ This is reminiscent of the scene in "The Old Monk", where Ethel, the mother of Emanuela, showed herself to Pál.

⁵¹ Same complaint as made by Sigismund von Schönbach, in "The Latest Scandal in High Society".

question for him. He swore all day long, and beat his wife as often as she came near him. She, however, replied speechlessly to his roughness, although with glances that betrayed hatred and contempt.

One day, he went across the Drina with other Serbs. The idea was to make a raid on the Turks in Bosnia. Micleta knew that he would be away for a few days, and so she too left her little house, and let a boatman cross her over the river.

Since the loss of the good-looking slave, the begum did not have a single moment of quiet. She imagined that she had truly loved the ingrate, and itched for revenge. One day she was sitting in gloomy brooding, sunken into the divan, chewing on one of her rosy fingernails, when it was announced to her that a woman wished to speak to her. Schohda ordered that this woman be allowed to enter. It was Micleta.

“What is it that you want from me?” asked the begum of the care-worn figure standing humbly at the door, in a voice not at all friendly.

A fine-looking slave has escaped from you,” said Micleta, “what do you offer me, if I deliver him to you again?”

Schohda sprang up. “Everything that you ask of me,”⁵² she said, “if your words are true.”

“What will you do with him, if I bring him to you?” asked Micleta.

“Oh, I’ll kill him, nothing else,” said the begum, with glowering eyes.

“If you will do that, then on the third night as of today, wait for me on the bank of the Drina,” said Micleta, and then turned to go away.

“But who is it that you are?” asked Schohda of the mysterious woman.

“I am his wife,” answered Micleta coolly, and went out of the door.

“Stanko returned home in an even worse mood than when he had left. He explained decidedly that he would never again want to lay his life on the line for such a dubious venture. The robbers had not found much, and had barely escaped with their lives.

⁵² A similar answer made by Sigismund von Schönbach, in “The Latest Scandal in High Society” to the woman he thought was Alma, but actually Richardine: “Ask for whatever you wish”.

Micleta advised him, apparently with indifference, to sell himself as a slave again, and so that all the money would be his, she offered herself to take on the role of the friend.⁵³ Stanko, who had already regretted having fled from the begum, accepted the idea with pleasure, and since he must not hope to again fall into the hands of a beautiful and loving widow, he decided that this time he would take to his heels even more readily.

It was the third night after the visit to the begum, so Micleta looked for the longest and strongest rope in her house, and this time Stanko helped her in the task. When they were finished with this, Micleta donned her Serbian jacket of pale blue fabric which reached down to her waist, and having fox-skin lined sleeves and front; and let Stanko follow her.

In a small row-boat they crossed the river; on the other side Micleta bound his hands behind his back, and it was astounding what strength the small, delicate woman manifested while doing this. And when she was finished, she carefully checked all the knots, and not until she was convinced of their resilience did she throw a noose around his neck, hold fast to the end of it⁵⁴ and march forward with him until they came to two riders waiting in the shadows of some maple trees. Without saying a word, one of the riders bound the already tied-up prisoner to the tail of his horse,⁵⁵ while the other slipped a small sack with money into Micleta's hand.

The situation seemed suspicious to Stanko. He asked his wife the meaning of what was going on, but since he gave him no answer, he threatened her; she, for her part, just laughed, turned her back on him, and headed towards the river.

With feverish impatience Schohda awaited the entrance of the captured man, and when he came, she received him wrapped in her white burnoose, heavily veiled, like a ghost in the semi-dark hall of her house. Then she let him lie in chains and bound to a stake. Two armed slaves had to guard him.

⁵³ This sentence was equally ambiguous in German. It refers to Pelagovics.

⁵⁴ The writer obviously meant to say, "hold fast to the [non-looped] end of the rope".

⁵⁵ While this seems impossible, other writers refer to it: a search reveals that this was one done; see for example, *Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Court of Appeals of the State of New York, Volume 10*, Little & Company, 1860, p. 151, [books.google.com/books?id=9ZwUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA151] which refers to *Halloway's Case* in "Darrow against the People".

The begum dedicated one more glance at Stanko's ineffectual anger, then she went into her bedchamber which adjoined the hall, and this became the first night that she slept well and contented since the disappearance of the good-looking slave.

For three days and nights Schohda did not bother herself further about her prisoner. Not until the fourth day did she have the languishing man brought to him. Stanko was hardly recognizable. Anger, hunger, and thirst had disfigured his onetime pleasing face into something else completely. Only with effort was he able to drag the heavy chains with him. He came in with a withering look of hate at Schohda, who was crouched down and rolled up like a cat on a low divan, and dressed in a purple kaftan lined with black sable. At the glance of the wretch, the green eyes of the begum blazed through the white veil with cruel satisfaction.

"I think, my dear, that you'll not get away from me again," she said maliciously, gloating with relish over his aspect.

Stanko ground his teeth in helpless anger.

"Be still, my one and only," she said, "you still have a hundred strokes upon your soles coming to you; then will come the release for which you so much crave."

While she let him receive the bastinados, she listened with sweet delight to the whimpering of the sufferer, and rolled herself voluptuously in her soft fur, while seated upon puffy cushions.

"That's enough," she said, when the torture no longer tickled her fancy. "Now crucify him, as befitting a good Christian."

Stanko looked at her, totally shocked. "You won't let me be killed, Madame," he cried out in despair.

"Of course I'll let you be killed, she replied, "I've paid heavily enough for this pleasure."

"Whom did you pay it to?" he asked, astonished.⁵⁶

"Your wife!" replied the begum with a malicious laugh.

⁵⁶ The "it" has no prior antecedent in the original text, and has been translated as such.

With his last strength, Stanko tugged vainly at his bonds, but the vengeful woman took fright at the possibility that if he should get loose, he would kill her, as she well saw in his bloodthirsty eyes. Quickly she ordered that he be led to the courtyard and nailed to the cross.⁵⁷ While down below in the courtyard the command was carried out, she sipped her coffee and sorbet noisily with the greatest peace of mind; then she sat at the grated window of her sleeping quarters and dedicated herself until sundown with cruel delight to the indescribable torments of the dying man.⁵⁸

January 11, 2022

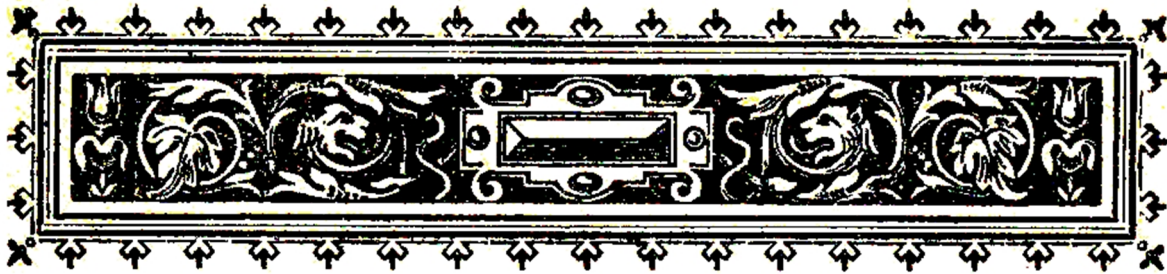
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All web references are of January 11, 2022.



⁵⁷ Notice that there had never been a mention of a cross, in the courtyard or elsewhere, before this.

⁵⁸ "'Crucified' photo is not of actual Armenian event", AAP FactCheck, February 24, 2020, www.aap.com.au/factcheck/crucified-photo-is-not-of-actual-armenian-event/



A Lady of the Congress

Translator's Note

The German title “*Eine Kogressdame*” is not translatable as “congresswoman”, but “A Congress Lady”, which for reasons which the reader might deduce the end of the story, might even be a better title than the one chosen above. However, even this second term might have one think of the U.S. Congress – which is wrong. Rather, we refer to the Congress of Vienna, an important event in European history.⁵⁹

At this point in the book, we are relieved from meeting vengeful women such as those found in the preceding two episodes. Yet there is a bit of what we might call soft revenge in that the heroine must certainly have believed that what was good for the geese was good for the gander,⁶⁰ even though she cloaks her virtue by a novel argument along the

⁵⁹ See footnote 17, page 24, in the story, “How One Becomes an Archbishop”.

⁶⁰ We have put “goose” in the plural for reasons which the story makes clear. Strangely, this expression is applied to a woman being able to do what a man does, but if it were correct (in pre-woke days), it should be “What’s good for the gander is good for the goose”. And does this latter expression exist? *China Daily* had an article with exactly that title date 7/22/2011, used in the sense of what is good for the boys is good for the girls. However, whether goose or gander is correct, the heroine applies this in the sense of: what is good for others, is good for her. [Referenced article accessed January 12, 2022.]

lines of “what nobody knows can’t hurt anyone”. The reader will be left to decide if there is any hypocrisy in her attitude.

*Come, come, you paraquito, answer me
Directly unto this question that I ask.
In faith, I'll break thy little finger, [...],
An if thou wilt not tell me all things true.*

Shakespeare, History of King Henry IV., Part 1, Act II, Scene III,
(ed. William J. Rolfe, New York: [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1880])⁶¹

A Lady of the Congress

The heroine of my story belongs to a great aristocratic house, and during the Vienna Congress she played an important part. That she would be noble, young, beautiful, and rich were the least of her qualities. At that time Vienna positively swarmed with women who, one has to confess, had all these qualities; but what all the others were not, *that* was our heroine – she was virtuous, and that was in those times such a rare characteristic that she was stared at, wondered about, and marvelled at, as one would over an incomprehensible puzzle. And what is the most noteworthy aspect of the thing, is that she did not at all live withdrawn from the world; on the contrary, her virtue was daily put to the strongest temptations in the eyes of all, and on all occasions she survived the tests to which she was put.

Her majestic palace with its gardens, which is famous even today because of its beauty, was the meeting place of the distinguished, gallant world – monarchs and ministers, princes and princesses plotted their love intrigues in its huge salons, and she, the most beautiful and desirable of them all, stood in their midst with a smile of sympathy on her fresh, proud lips for the weaknesses of those in her surroundings. An army of admirers lay at her feet, she flirted with them all, but none could boast of having attained the least favour. Yes, she drove the manly society present at the palace into despair; with all means available they tried to get the better of her, but there was a point beyond which it was

⁶¹ Originally read in Heine, “*Shakspeare's Mädchen und Frauen*” : Lady Percy, *Heinrich Heine's Sämtliche Werke*, Zweiter Band, Hrsg. Otto F. Lachmann [Leipzig, Philipp Reclam jun.] n.d.

impossible to go. Yet, out of her pretty eyes came a sensuous glow and from her entire being there exuded an unquenchable thirst for pleasure.

Could a woman of these fascinating appearances really be virtuous? Impossible, and yet anyone who did not want to believe in her reputation suffered defeat.

What she had, in contrast to what many of the ladies of France and Italy that were there did not, was a rare mix of composure and circumspection. Perhaps she was not as clever as they were in their surroundings, but certainly much wiser and more level-headed.

Had a society of monarchs and statesmen come together there to decide over the weal and woe of their countries and peoples? Oh, no!! One had assembled in order to amuse oneself, and to go out on amorous escapades. Politics was a good excuse, and it did not occur to anybody to take the matter seriously. And if anyone finally dedicated himself to these boring matters, if he had to deal with the history of entire peoples, then it took place in the most frivolous manner – inexcusable levity was to be the corner-stone of later unhappiness, wars, and revolutions – who was going to think about that back then? One had better things to do!

To conquer a beautiful woman was for a monarch or a statesman a much more important matter than the fate of his people, and a tête-à-tête with a pretty actress or singer was preferred to deliberation in the conference halls.

A woman such as the heroine of my story had to be of the utmost importance to the males gathered there, and to vanquish this woman was for those men a much more serious matter than the happiness or unhappiness of Europe. And thus it was that the beautiful woman was besieged by a swarm of men, whom she very well knew how to keep in suspense, stirring up hopes through flirtation – hopes that she had no wish of fulfilling.

One day, the crowd organized a sleigh-ride to Schönbrunn.⁶² The ladies vied with one another in the splendour of their dress; each sought to outdo the other, to outshine her, and to this end original and costly furs played a chief role. The lady of my story appeared in a rose satin fur, totally lined and padded with authentic ermine, which fit snugly to her tall and full figure, and allowing the feminine forms to be highlighted to the most advantageous degree. In front of her sleigh rode the czar of Russia. The fine, imposing appearance of this monarch got the attention of all the ladies, but this time, the czar only

⁶² The palace of that name is meant.

had eyes for the majestic woman who lay as beautiful as a goddess upon her white bear-skin and rocked herself in its soft furs. For the admiration of the czar, who certainly kept turning his head towards her, she had a smile ready at all times, so that he had to believe that there was no more obstacle standing in the way of his intended success. When the sleigh arrived at Schönbrunn, the Czar Alexander⁶³ rushed to help the lovely lady alight, and as he pulled back the fur covers which had kept her warm, he whispered passionate words into her ear.

All the company gathered there, watching with envy and jealousy,⁶⁴ believed that now the moment had come when virtue would be defeated, when she would fall – had to fall; but those gathered there were wrong: even the interesting and attractive Russian czar could not achieve more with this wise lady than any of the other gentlemen. His homage had only served to make her the most celebrated beauty of Vienna and to crown her triumph.

Her princely spouse, no less proud about his wife's virtue, let no opportunity go by to boast about it – this at the cost of his acquaintances and friends. Once there was a conflict between one of his relatives and him – the former's wife having cheated on him in the most uninhibited way. The prince had again boasted of his wife's virtue; the other, guessing the purpose, became angry and gave the opinion that he did not believe this about her virtue until he had proof thereof: he claimed that all husbands were cuckolded; it was just a matter of the cunning of the women, and of their ability to dissimulate.

The prince, scandalized by the suspicion against his beautiful wife, irritably challenged his relative to furnish proof, or to put up his dukes. The latter was ready to deliver the proof within fourteen days, or to accept the challenge of the fight.

So now the sceptic organized his own police force, which had to watch both the princess and her palace day and night. The celebrated woman could take no step that hawk-like eyes would miss seeing, and would faithfully report.

And so it came about that before the fourteen days were over, the dear relative invited to prince to closely watch during the witching hours over the course of several nights the back gate of his park, in order to convince himself that the form that had the

⁶³ Alexander I.

⁶⁴ The real or apparent redundancy is German is "*Neid und Eifersucht*".

habit of walking in and out of there, which took itself directly to the chambers of the princess, was not a spirit, but a very real man of flesh and blood.

The prince, who placed not the least bit of doubt in the fidelity of his wife, found the suspicions of his friend laughable, but nevertheless decided to be at the location around midnight, in order to satisfy himself of the groundlessness of this information and to prepare the slanderer for defeat.

With a sword at his side, the prince stood pressed into the shadow of a column of the park wall⁶⁵ in the vicinity of his little gate at the designated hour. Almost an hour went by without a human soul making an appearance. He was just about to leave his post in anger, when quickly-moving steps were perceived behind the wall on the soft sand of the garden path. Excited, he hastily pressed himself back into his corner to watch the little door with sharp eyes. Carefully, a key was inserted and the little gate opened quietly. According to appearances, here was a young thin man; he stepped out quickly and locked the door as carefully as it had been opened. With a leap, the prince was at his side and called him. The latter looked around, startled, and recognizing the prince, fled with broad strides across the street. At the first move that the stranger had made to flee,⁶⁶ the insulted husband had unsheathed his sword and thrust it into the other's shoulder. He had only slightly wounded the fugitive, but still enough to have a trail of blood left behind him. The wounded man had had a considerable advantage over the prince, who, older and stronger, could not run as fast, and so the nobleman remained behind in his pursuit. The trail of blood for some strange reason had led only to the door of a little house in which part of the servants were quartered. He did not want to enter, in order not to bring his people into the picture.

Excited and angry, he started walking back. Who was his wife's lover? And how was it that he could flee into the house of his servants? He decided to give a severe questioning to all of them the following day, before even speaking about the matter with his wife.

The next day, however, he was up at a very early hour, as he was sought by his friends for a ride out into the country from which he did not return until dinner. His wife received him, beautiful, cheerful, and courteous as always. But as lovely as she was, the

⁶⁵ Hiding by a wall was an idea already used in "Lady Asta's Secret".

⁶⁶ This non-sequential relation of events is found in the original text.

food was bad to the same degree. In the worst of moods, he shouted at the valet serving the food, demanding to know the meaning of this divergence from the normal course. The latter answered that the first cook had become ill during the night, and that the dinner had to be prepared by his assistants.

“What has happened to the cook?” asked the prince.

“He was attacked in the street by thieves, and wounded in the arm,” answered the valet naively.

With a wild glance at his wife, the prince jumped up. A terrible suspicion stirred in his mind. He wanted to leave the room immediately, but with the most cheerful, courteous smile in the world, his wife reminded him that it would be unseemly to let her sup alone. She was right: above all things, decorum had to be observed. The prince sat down again, and although he was thoroughly upset, he nevertheless gave the appearance that he was eating with his usual appetite – indeed, as long as the valet was present during the dinner, he even forced himself to chat with his wife freely over indifferent matters.

After dinner, through a series of skillful manoeuvres, the clever woman also managed for a few hours to keep her excited husband from looking for the cook, and when he finally did that, the chef had fled, and no one could tell where to.

Frantic with jealousy, the prince returned to his wife. The beautiful woman lay in a comfortable fur coat on a low ottoman, and conversed warmly with her parrot. The prince, even more irritated by her calm attitude, told her about his adventure of the previous night, and with strong words, accused her of unfaithfulness committed with a plebian.

Continues on page after the illustration.



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„Die Fürstin ließ sich durch den Zorn des Gemahls in ihrer Unterhaltung mit dem Papagei durchaus nicht stören.“

The princess did not let the anger of the prince disturb her in the least during her conversation with the parrot.

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The princess did not let the anger of the prince disturb her in the least during her conversation with the parrot. Not until he was finished with his accusations did she slowly and daintily raise her head, and say:

“What do you want? You have no right to complain. I only am doing what everyone else does. That I choose someone from outside of our social circles brings you and me advantages, in that we, in the eyes of our acquaintances are considered a model married couple, and you have the pleasure of boasting about your wife’s virtue.”

As frivolous as the answer was, her husband had to recognize its logic. He had clearly indicated to him, that she did no more than she was bound to do, if she kept for him, in the eyes of the world, an apparent faithfulness. No woman of distinguished society at that time was true to her husband, with what right would the prince demand what no one else did? And he was indeed clever enough to adapt himself to the situation, and not to make a scandal.

She, however, kept her taste à la Catherine,⁶⁷ until advanced in years; and now that her husband found it somewhat risky to boast of his wife’s virtue, at the same time there was nobody else, who upset by his boasts, would tell him that he was no better off than the rest. Thus, the princess, now deceased for several years even today is considered to have been one of the most virtuous of Viennese women of the century.

January 13, 2022

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⁶⁷ This refers to the love-life of Catherine the Great. As of the present date, *Wikipedia* gave a total of 12 lovers, (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Lovers_of_Catherine_the_Great); another claim is that there were from 12 to 22: www.biography.com/news/catherine-the-great-lovers. Information accessed January 13, 2022.

The Ghost of Vranov

Translator's Note

Here we have a story about a place which exists, or has existed, depending on how the name is read. The German is Wranow, which is roughly pronounced Vranov, the spelling accepted by the United States, at least in the past.⁶⁸ It was once part of the German Empire,⁶⁹ is now called Břasy,⁷⁰ and apparently has become so insignificant with its two thousand odd inhabitants, that it does not rank an article in the German version of *Wikipedia*.

That said, it remains to be pointed out that this is a work of fiction, and that any similarity of names here to those of any person, living or dead, is mere coincidence.

More important to the translator than the confessed purposes of the original author is the warning that this story implies to people who enjoy practical jokes. As here below, they can result in death – something which happens frequently enough at parties for men about to be married,⁷¹ or during initiation rites, such as happen at universities.⁷² Therefore, it is suggested that the moral of the story be: don't engage in such practices.

Whether the female character of this story fully complies with the vengeful ones described in the original author's "Foreword" is questionable. The woman in this tale is directly responsible for the murder of her husband, but there was no revenge here. It was intended later on against another person, but could never be carried out.

The Slavic name "Marfa" has been translated to "Martha".

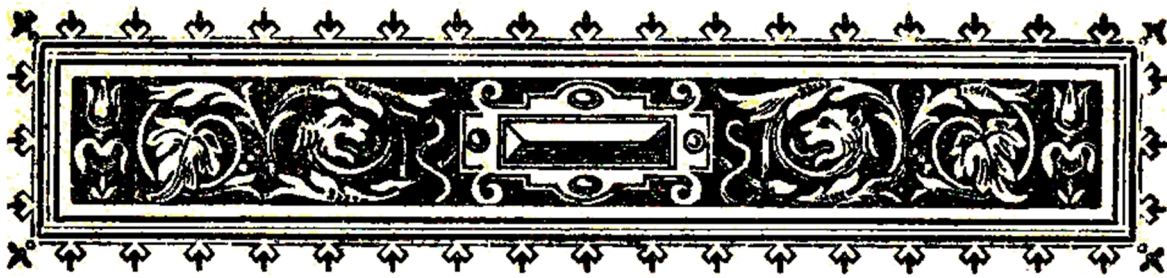
⁶⁸ See *Czechoslovakia, Official Standard Names Approved by the United States Board on Geographic Names*, [Department of the Interior: Washington, D.C., 1955]

⁶⁹ "Former eastern territories", <http://ehemalige-ostgebiete.de/en/place/215505-wranow/1939>

⁷⁰ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B%C5%99asy>

⁷¹ A search for "deaths at stag parties" will give supporting evidence, in Spanish, "*muertes en despedidas de soltero*".

⁷² One may find the examples available to be so morbid, that we refuse to mention anything more than the fact that in one list, the majority of deaths since 1990 have been from drinking, including one exceptional case of the beverage being water. [Result from a popular on-line encyclopedia.]



The Ghost of Vranov

Lazar Wysoki was the richest peasant in Vranov, and would have been even richer if his wife had not loved finery so much and shied away from work. Almost twice a month she rode into the near-lying little town of Dukla⁷³ from which she would return heavily laden with ribbons, lace, and colourful silken cloth. Lazar loved her, and enjoyed seeing his wife raise the envy of the neighbours, and furthermore, as they had no children, why should the couple save?

Martha was not exactly beautiful, but well-built and moved lightly and as gracefully as a cat. Carelessness, heartlessness, and sensuality shone from her deep-set small grey eyes. Her red-blond braids were too heavy for her small head, and they pulled it back somewhat; and that gave her, in the context of her snub-nose and sensuous pouting lips, an almost impudent aspect. Her ample breast was always bedecked with several rows of [ducats](#), while her neck and arms were adorned with red coral.

A few years after Lazar Wysoki had married Martha, the daughter of a poor day-labourer, he had the bad luck to fall from a tree from which he had wanted to pick cherries for his young wife. Since that time, he was somewhat forlorn and did not ever want to leave the side of his better half; who, however, seemed more bothered than pleased by this attachment. She rode off to Dukla even more often and frequently stayed there for several days. The bad people in the village believed that Martha was on occasion seen in the company of an elegant sergeant of hussars. The rumour came to Lazar, who dared to

⁷³ No place of such a name has been found near Vranov, as they are on opposite sides of Czechoslovakia. An ambiguous mention is found in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report, Foreign Radio Broadcasts, Nos. 191-200*, [Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1970], p. D1 of 6th Oct 70, books.google.com/books?id=Hvlcti4PijMC&pg=PA54-IA25&lpg=PA54-IA25&dq=Dukla+czechoslovakia+town. The Dukla mentioned seems to be one and the same as the town in Poland, just across from the border: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dukla>

reproach her, but Martha just laughed at him and explained to him down to the smallest detail that Sergeant Abdon was her cousin whom she had met by chance in Dukla, and he had promised, such as was fitting among relatives, to visit her in the near future. Lazar was ashamed of himself, and in order to reconcile himself with his wife, asked her to go to the city immediately the following day to return with her dear cousin: she was so kind as to do his bidding.

Now Abdon came every week to visit, and Martha no longer found it necessary to go to the city so often, as the good-looking hussar was so kind as to bring her everything which she required for her finery.

Finally the winter came, and Christmas approached. Deep snow lay in the streets and on the fields. Martha was extraordinarily worried, and bade Abdon never to ride around without his carbine, as there were wolves – and even bears – that tended to show themselves; so the cousin did as she asked.

The young fellows and girls in the villages of Galicia⁷⁴ play all sorts of pranks around Christmas time. As the Jews do at Purim,⁷⁵ those youngsters go into the houses where they freely carry out their mischief and often coarse horse-play.

Martha asked that on occasion Lazar should dress up again, and she indeed suggested that he should allow himself to be sewn up inside of a bearskin, in order to give the guests a really good scare. Although the idea was not really according to his taste, as he would have preferred to stay at home at the well-laid table with its wines and cakes than to cavort around through the snow and ice in an uncomfortable bearskin, his wife knew how to cajole and to ask him in such a way that the weak-willed loving man finally gave in – although groaning – to accept the role of the bear.

Martha had procured the bearskin with a quickness that was noticeable, and she knew how to get the servants out of the way with skill, and to carefully sew her husband

⁷⁴ This is the Polish, not the Spanish Galicia, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Galicia_and_Lodomeria.

⁷⁵ Judd Yadid, "Jest in Time for Purim: 7 Jewish Pranks, Jokes and Hoaxes", *Haaretz*, Mar. 12, 2014, www.haaretz.com/jewish/jest-in-time-for-purim-7-jewish-pranks-jokes-and-hoaxes-1.5332596 . As this is none too specific about Purim, we also offer: David Nordell, "Purim Holiday A Time of Satire, Masquerade and Practical Jokes", *AP News*, March 7, 1985, <https://apnews.com/article/a2de90256cd56e79b799d62d723f831c>

into the bearskin behind closed doors; thereafter she shoved him into a small chamber which had an exit onto the street – it was there he had to wait until evening.

Never had the times passed so merrily in Wysoki's house as this time. The wine flowed in streams, and Martha, richly dressed in a dyed and stitched lambskin, her breasts bedecked with coral, always let another keg be rolled in as she sat with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes in the midst of her guests. Of course, Abdon was there too, and it was to him that the high-spirited woman dedicated the most toasts. When the noise and the laughter had reached its greatest intensity, Martha disappeared from the room for a moment. Nobody noticed this, and neither did anyone see her come back in. Immediately thereafter, there was heavy knocking upon the window shutter.

Martha sprang to it and opened it – the others followed her. Barely had she unclosed it, when she let out a terrible cry, and sprang back into the room.

“A bear!” she cried out, “a bear!”

Abdon wanted to seize his carbine from the wall, but already Martha stood next to him and pressed the weapon into his hands. There was a shot, and immediately thereafter, a human moan. Those present looked at one another in horror. Abdon bounded out of the room and examined the animal he had killed.

“Man alive!” he shouted immediately. “Help, it's a human.”

Now everybody rushed out. In an instant the bearskin was cut open, and there lay Lazar Wysoki, a bleeding corpse. The peasants took off their hats, knelt down and prayed; but Martha threw herself upon the deceased with loud howling while behaving like a madwoman.

Abdon had leaned against the wall and looked with horror at the woman who had served him so readily with the carbine. Then he went into the stable, retrieved his horse, and rode out to the courtyard. In spite of her despair, Martha heard the hoofbeats of his horse, jumped up to call after him; but he no longer looked back.

The dead man was carried into the room. The guests departed, just one peasant remained, and he promised to hold a vigil over the dead body. Once Martha was alone, she dried her tears, threw herself upon her bed, and thought of Abdon, who had ridden off without a word to her.

Two days later, Lazar Wysoki was buried. At the graveside, Martha took pains to break out into tears again, but this time, she did not succeed. In vain did she look among the mourners, but did not find Abdon among them. She tore so vehemently at her rosary that the pearl beads fell into the grave and bounced against the lid of the coffin. Once the cleric had ended his prayer, the crowd dispersed – no one joined Martha – she went home alone, the veil before her face in order to hide her embarrassment and her anger.

Weeks past, but Abdon did not show his face in Vranov anymore. She sent messengers to him, but every time he let it be known that he was not given a single day's leave by his superiors. For this reason the widow had a horse brought to her, and she herself rode to Dukla.

In a small inn within which she had often met the sergeant, she dismounted, and had Abdon called. Now here his excuse could not serve, and after she had waited several hours, he came.

Stiff, hands on his cap, he remained standing by the door, as in front of his colonel.

“What do you command?” he asked.

“But do come here,” she said cajolingly, “and sit beside me.”

With a certain degree of shyness, Abdon took his place, but as far from her as possible.

“Why don't you come to Vranov, my love?” she asked.

“I bring you bad luck,” he replied evasively.

“You have brought me luck,” she said, and her grey eyes bore into him. “We can get married.”

Abdon lowered his eyes, and as the widow enumerated to him her riches in land, horses, cows, and sheep; he listened to her quietly, without lifting his eyes even once.

“Leave your military service,” she said, “and come to Vranov and we'll celebrate the wedding.”

He sighed, and promised to come.

Although Martha had not been totally happy with Abdon's behaviour, she nevertheless rode back to her village, more cheerfully than she had left it.

Several weeks passed again, and although Abdon still did not come – he wrote her that he had a lot to do with the business relating to the coming event – she made all the necessary preparations for the wedding. The designated day came. The bride stood in the midst of her guests, richly adorned, and waited for the bridegroom. Hour after hour passed, but Abdon did not arrive. Martha became pale, and then paler yet; the guests began to get uneasy. A few even left. It was almost dark, and now, the widow went out to the stable unnoticed, mounted a horse, and galloped off for Dukla. She wanted to get Abdon herself; she had to get her bridegroom to Vranov dead or alive.

But Abdon was not in Dukla either; after he had been released from his military obligations, several days more had passed since he had made off for his home country. At the grey of dawn, Martha came back to her home. No one had seen her go, no one saw her return. There, even now, stood the wedding cake and the cold roast meat on the table. The servants were sleeping and the guests had long gone. With a single swoop of her powerful arm, she flung all the wedding treats to the floor, such that the glasses and the porcelain clanked noisily away. Anything which was breakable within the room she destroyed into many pieces, and then she sat on her bed, tired out, and began to sob loudly. It did not pain her so much that Abdon had abandoned her, as the fact that he had escaped her vengeance – she did not even know where his home country was.

To show the villagers how indifferent she was to the entire affair, the very next day she invited half of them to her, let musicians come, and entertained them in the best possible way. She herself had put on her finest clothes; and when dancing, she swirled around as the most high-spirited and the most fantastic of them all.

After that, Martha only lived for pleasure. She rented out her farming concern – she had never had any desire to work, and now, even less. Many courted the hand of the rich widow, but she did not want to be bound to anyone anymore, she relished the unbridled life so much. The handsomest devils of the village went in and out of her house. Her kindness and her always richly laid-out table drew them there.

It was towards the harvest season when the church caretaker related that as he had returned from the tavern to his house late one night, he had seen the ghost of Lazar Wysoki. The rumour spread quickly throughout the village; the strange thing about Wysoki's death

was again spoken of, and together with that there were a few caustic remarks about Martha and the disappeared sergeant. When Martha heard about what the villagers were saying, she was not a little upset. She resolved to avenge herself, and for her part related that this person and that one, long dead, was also spooking at night, and thus the result was that through her, a commotion was caused in the entire village.

In order to convince people of the truth of her words, she decided to dress up as a ghost, and to give fright in this manner. She had two comfortable stilts made in order to appear properly tall and thin; she sewed two linen sheets together, and pulled the double-sized linen over her head. Thus it was that at midnight she went through the village, knocked on almost every window, and as the dwellers retreated in horror from them, she laughed to herself with pleasure.

At the end of the village, the beekeeper met her. The courageous man called to her, and as she did not answer, aimed and fired his gun at her.

Without a sound coming from her, she fell to the ground. The bullet had struck her in the middle of her heart.

No one felt sorry for her. Those who meant best towards her, said, “She has atoned for her sin, maybe God will forgive her, too. Amen.”

December 28, 2021

Translation © 2021 by Paul Karl Moeller

***Note:** All web-sites in the references were accessed December 28, 2021.*

The Noble Red Manor

Translator's Note

The original German title of the following was “*Der Rote Edelhof*”. The last word caused significant problems in translation, as it was found neither in our dictionary, nor on a popular web translator. A reference was found in *Wikipedia*, which gave several options: the relevant ones were gave the German words *Dinghof*, for Germany and Switzerland; *Freihof*, for Austria, and *Edelhof*, with no article of its own, but a link to *Festes Haus*, defined as the property of a knight. None of those entries had a link to an equivalent English translation. Since our story deals with Poland under Habsburg rule, it must be suspected that *Dinghof* does not apply, but it came closest to getting us to a similar concept in English, the *Gutshof*, understood as an estate of land in the old British sense, that is, having a manor house from which the rest of the property – which could have a village and farm buildings – was administered. All the previous words have such an idea to a greater or lesser degree, but they also may include the idea of judicial independence.

While the title may well refer to the estate as a whole, the context suggests emphasizing the manor.

The German spelling of the lead character, Wladislaw Bograzki, has been anglicized to Vladislav Bogratsky,⁷⁶ to facilitate correct pronunciation.

The story does not follow the typical Sacher-Masoch pattern of a woman getting back at male society. Nevertheless, the violence here is not for the squeamish – in some ways exceeds that of what we saw in “The Titled Turkish Lady, or the Begum”, as it also includes extreme violence against women.

⁷⁶ Not to be confused with any living person by that name.

The Noble Red Manor

On a small hill in the middle of the village of Bialagora,⁷⁷ there is a nice manor that is generally known in that area as the red manor house. This is a quiet and peaceful corner; a more peaceful one could not be imagined. The masonry is everywhere so splendidly white as if it were recently snow-covered, and the roofs shine blood-red against a green background; for encircling them, everything is green: the vines and the other creeping and climbing plants which curl up on the espaliers and other suitable flora; the old linden-tree, the fruit trees; the village – which is a huge garden all around the manor; the stunted willows standing on the banks of a stream; and the hill of this encirclement upon which the cattle pasture. And as all around is green and fresh, likewise one constantly hears friendly, cheerful voices: the lark rejoices, the quail sings, the swallow chirps while hanging on their nests, or the storks clatter behind the chimney-hood of the farm building; and if all is quiet, the crickets chirp inside the old walls.

Likewise, the present owner of the manor, Pan Kochanski,⁷⁸ and the peasants of Bialagora live together peacefully and on friendly terms, as befits good neighbours.

No one guesses what terrible scenes had taken place here; and when one relates them, the listener shakes his head and finds it hard to believe, because it is not on account of the red roof that this manor is named as it is.

It had not yet come to the worst of times in Galicia⁷⁹ – those nobles of old Polish stock still led the regiment and beat their subjects often, but considering the circumstances, they also let them live their lives very well; the true slave-drivers of those peasants were the gentlemen of a later period who stepped into the salon of a lady on tip-toe only in shoes and torn socks; but in their villages meted out kicks with their muddy spurred boots; while their

⁷⁷ Such a village, spelt Białogóra, exists about 70 kilometres north-west of Gdansk, Poland, in the northernmost part of that country; under the spelling Biała Góra, there are various places in Poland. The translation is "White Mountain".

⁷⁸ Under this name, with final "i" Anglicized to "y", this story has been found in English translation under the title of *The Master Masochist: Tales of Sadistic Mistresses*. Year of publication is 1968. The supposed author is Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, the translator is unknown, as only a snippet view is available on Google Books.

⁷⁹ A region of Poland at the time of Sacher-Masoch's writing, but now partly in Poland and partly in Ukraine.

womenfolk who at one moment were leafing through the pages of Manfred⁸⁰ with their small hands framed in costly fur, wielded their nagaika⁸¹ at the very next moment.

The old lord Bogratsky lived with his wife, her always official lover, his servants – who not rarely were born in the manor and died there – his peasants, horses, cattle, geese and swine in such a patriarchal manner as Abraham or Odysseus once did. But when the young Vladislav Bogratsky took up the reins after his death, things became different, very different. Well, not quite immediately.

In the beginning, he brought a young wife into the house – she was a pure angel, not only as to her appearance, but also with regards to her entire being; and as long as she was there, at least things did not get worse. But one day the angel unfolded her wings and flew off, and indeed this was with a young, good-looking Frenchman who introduced himself in Bialagora as a viscount, but who was nothing more than a Parisian barber, according to later information.

Byron was his favourite poet, but because a Pole in those days of mutual embitterment was not allowed to approve of anything Russian, he devoured Pushkin and Lermontov in secret.

Nourished on the one hand through his scorn of the world, and on the other hand by the almost despotic power that had been granted to this barely thirty-year-old to wield over his subjects, he showed ever more Nero-like characteristics: cruel joy at the suffering of others, and the lust to use violence against them, to mistreat them, and to torment them.

Within a short time he was feared in the entire region as a Don Juan of the most dangerous kind: he was no seducer through compliments, or sweet words; who through fascinating eloquence deceived one to a demonic passion; but a tyrant who made every woman his own through naked power, and once he was finished with her, shoved her away without any sympathy or regret.

He had already had of series of love affairs with peasants and Jewish women, noble ladies and actresses; when one day in late autumn as he was returning from a hunt, he saw a young peasant girl of extraordinary beauty standing in front of a small miserable cottage of his village.

⁸⁰ Written by Lord Byron.

⁸¹ A Cossack whip.

Bogratsky just then had been murmuring the gloomy poem of Lermontov:

Blindly we drink the glow of wine
From the golden cup of being
When our tears filling up a Rhine
Overshadow all our spreeing.

But when finally before deceased
From one's eyes has fallen the blind
When all that had once pleasure leased
Then the wind leaves it all behind.

It is then we first see the shine
When the golden cup we drain;
Mania alone was the golden wine,
Driving mad the tippler's brain.⁸²

as the girl greeted him with the words, "Praised be Jesus Christ". He returned the greeting with a mocking, bitter smirk, but in the next moment he stared at her strongly cultivated face with dark, languishing eyes, and remained standing – completely entranced.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Maruvka Kostecki."

Since just like every other peasant woman, she did not wear her braids, but a red kerchief and an old sheepskin in these cold times, he had a doubt as to whether he had a married woman in front of him or not.

"Who is your husband?"

"I am not married," she gave in answer.

"So you have a sweetheart?"

"Sergei Kostalko."

"Are you fond of him?"

⁸² On the Internet one finds this as "The Cup of Life". The present version is by the translator, as reworked from the German version used by Sacher-Masoch.

“Yes.”

“With all your heart?”

“With all my heart.”

“I like that,” replied Bogratsky with a diabolical smile, “you will come to me this evening, you understand? The rest – we can wait and see.”

“May God repay you,” said Maruvka, kissing his hand. He let that happen and at the same time touched her forehead with his lips.

“When shall I come, gracious lord?”

“As soon as it gets dark.” He nodded to her, and walked on.

As Maruvka was going towards the manor by the light of the first stars, she met Sergei.

“Where are you going?” he asked.

“To the manor.”

“To whom?”

“To the lord.”

“Are you mad, do you know what awaits you there?”

“The lord means well with us.”

“I’ll tell you what’ll happen,” replied Sergei, “the lord’ll keep you in his house and have you nicely dressed for his pleasure, and when he doesn’t want you any more, he’ll want us to get married, but I won’t do it, you can carry your shame alone.”

“Don’t be afraid,” said the girl, “I would rather die than be unfaithful to you.”

As the valet led her into the room of the estate-owner, the latter was lying in the manner of a pasha on a Turkish divan, took the long pipe out his mouth, and eyed her with sarcastic pleasure; then with a gesture of his fine, well-manicured hands, he dismissed his valet.

When Maruvka left the room, she was burning with shame. She glanced shyly and fearfully around, and hurriedly stuck up the one braid which had gotten loose.

She did not leave the manor any more. She was held in like a prisoner, but more like a captured princess or the favourite in a harem.

Poor Sergei snuck around the house day and night without having any success in speaking to her. More than three weeks had passed before he saw her for the first time, but only from a distance. Bogratsky was just getting onto a horse and Maruvka stood before the house, watching him. She was still clad peasant-like, but in more expensive material, which gave her the appearance of a cad's wife of previous centuries. The red boots on her feet well matched the short skirt of colourful Turkish material and out of the blue bodice burst a dazzling white blouse. Over this she wore a long, open fur out of pale-blue satin, lined and padded with grey Siberian squirrel. From the head down, corals and gold coins hung down to the full breast, while a cloth of red silk, similar to a turban, was wound about her hair.

Bogratsky bent down from the saddle in order to kiss her, then he galloped off and Maruvka kept watching him go, smiling as she did so. Sergei slinked through the rose-bushes that grew around the house, but at the moment that he came near to her, she, without seeing him, turned back into the house, and the Cossack who was cleaning the horse tack sent him off with coarse language.

On another occasion, when snow had already fallen, she met Sergei in the manor. Maruvka wanted to flee, but he held her firmly.

"What are you afraid of," he began, "does your conscience bother you?"

"Let me go."

"Not until you yourself tell me if you belong to the lord or to me."

"What can a poor girl do against violence?"

"So flee with me into the hills," he cried.

"I won't think of it," she gave as an answer, smiling as she did so, "things go quite well for me here."

"Maruvka, don't you fear God's punishment?" asked Sergei, with tears in his eyes.

“Blockhead!” she cried out with a contemptuous look, “Who tells you that there is a God? The lord says that God exists only for the peasants, not for us.”⁸³

“Are you mad?”

“You are, leave me alone.” She began to cry for help. He pulled out his knife with the intention of stabbing her, but he missed, for Bogratsky, who just then was coming by restrained him, and then his people overpowered him and bound his hands behind his back.

“Do you know what’s coming to you now?” began Maruvka, with a malicious smile, “The gallows.”

“No, my dear,” interrupted Bogratsky, “he shall not get off that easily.”

He ordered that a bench be set up high, with Sergei strapped to it; while his two Cossacks began the sad task with the cudgels, the lord stood there with Maruvka at the door of the house and looking on. She was a bit pale, but around her lips played a smile of satisfaction.

After Sergei had received one hundred strokes, he lay there as if lifeless. In the courtyard, no one bothered himself with him any longer.

A compassionate old woman led him to her cottage. She was considered to be a witch. And indeed, she brought about a miracle in him. Not only did she save his life, but she made him whole again. Hardly had Bogratsky found this out that this was so, than he had him come over to his manor.

It was evening when he was brought in. Maruvka was seated on a low divan, washing her feet in a large room in which Bogratsky used to entertain his guests. She was now coiffured like a lady, and in the splendid green silk marten-skin lined jacket.⁸⁴ She indeed did look like a true Polish noble lady and was captivatingly beautiful. No less dazzling was the appearance of Bogratsky. He was a tall, thin man with excellently proportioned members, with the face of a true Adonis; and a robe of light blue silk bordered

⁸³ There is an irony in this, as the first three letters of Bogratsky translate from Russian and Polish as God. Of course, **he** existed as a god towards the peasants, a species of Nordic Loki.

⁸⁴ The word in the original is “kazabaika” for jacket – no translation has been found, except a reference in the Argentine newspaper, *Página 12*, “*Mujeres de armas tomar*”, 27 June 2007, which calls it a fur-lined jacket. Another usage has been found in a Portuguese translation of *Venus in Furs*, as *A Vénus De Kazabaika*.

with ermine was well-matched to his delicate, fresh skin-colour and the rich blond hair and beard which encircled it. He sat at Maruvka's side, and at his feet lay a large hunting dog.

"So, are you here again?" began Bogratsky, "do you want revenge, or are you giving yourself up?"

Sergei knelt down in front of his lord and kissed his hand.

"Thus it is right," said the latter. "You will now stay in the manor and serve us."

Sergei got up and sobbed.

"It gives me pleasure," continued Bogratsky, turning around, "that your sweetheart must be my man-servant."

"To me, too," she replied, smiling. Just then, she let the parlour-maid dry her feet. The hunting dog had gotten up and began to lick her bare soles, but she drew back her feet and laughed, so that the dog rapidly crouched under the table again. "Do you know," she now said, "that it is a great pleasure to have the soles of one's feet licked?"

She called to the dog to come to her, but it stayed put.

"What do you want" asked Bogratsky.

"It should lick my feet!"

"And you need the dog for that?" asked Bogratsky with a diabolical laugh, "What then is this person here for. Forward, Sergei, do what she wants."

"Lord – but I am not a dog!" stammered Sergei.

"Then we'll make you one," replied Bogratsky.

"March! Forward!" ordered Maruvka. Sergei did not move. Then Bogratsky grabbed him by the hair and flung him to the ground and beat him with the nagaika. "Are you going to obey," he shouted while doing this, "are you?"

And so then he obeyed, he lay under Maruvka's feet and began to lick her soles; and when she had had enough, Bogratsky had him remove his morocco leather boots and had the same slavish service performed on him.

While he had Sergei under his feet like a dog, like a worm, he spoke to Maruvka, who lay yearning lustfully against his shoulder, “It is really a pleasure, and it will now be doubled, that your former lover, a former rival, has to do me the same favour.”

* * * *

A year passed by, again it was winter, and suddenly, but not unexpectedly, the Polish Revolution of 1846 broke out;⁸⁵ but the ill-treated peasantry, instead of following the flag of the insurgents, turned their scythes and their flails against the latter. Armed bands formed which went from manor to manor and murdered everyone who fell into their hands.

One of them, led by Sergei, forced their way in the manor of Bialagora. In vain, several of the attackers were shot down from the house, but they broke their way in and killed the administrator as well as the other officials and servants. Then Maruvka was hauled out of her hiding place. The women ripped the clothing from her body, had straw put around her,⁸⁶ and lit it. She ran through the village, crying out in pain, while followed by a hail of stones, and finally died on a heap of gravel upon which she had collapsed.

Even more horrible was the death of Bogratsky. The peasants nailed him like a shot-down vulture to a barn door and shot at him with their rifles and pistols for an hour or more, as one does at a target. He had seven bullets in his body when they finally killed him with their threshing flails.⁸⁷

The blood which flowed in streams on that day is why from then onwards, the quiet and peaceful manor is called “the red manor house”.

Today, peace and harmony prevail there.

Thank goodness, the good old times have gone forever.

January 14, 2022

All web references are of January 14, 2022.

Translation © 2022 by Paul Karl Moeller

⁸⁵ Tomas W. Simons, Jr., “The Peasant Revolt of 1846 in Galicia: Recent Polish Historiography”, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Dec., 1971), pp. 795-817, Cambridge University Press, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2493849>, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2493849>, accessed February 3, 2022.

⁸⁶ There is no mention of Maruvka being immobilized, or of how much straw was used.

⁸⁷ The deaths of both Maruvka and Bogratsky are described in ways too ridiculous for belief, e.g., in an hour of shooting, only seven bullets! Maruvka’s death is equally unbelievable, once she was set fire to, how was she going to run around the village?; www.quora.com/How-far-can-someone-run-through-a-blaze-of-fire-if-that-is-the-only-way-to-get-out-and-survive - accessed February 11, 2022

Athaliah of Zolta Reka

Translator's Introduction

The German title of this story is “*Die Athalia von Zolta Reka*.”

The original Athalia was a queen, and is found in the sacred books of Judeo-Christianity. She ordered Baal worship – that is, the worship of a false god in Hebrew eyes – and had all pretenders to her throne killed, including any member of her own family who had survived a previous purge. Jean Racine wrote the play *Athalie* in 1691; 44 years later, George Frederick Handel composed *Athalia*, based on her life, and in 1845; Felix Mendelssohn wrote music *Athalie*, based on Racine's work. Other composer's names were also inspired by this playwright's work.

Zolta Reka translates as “Golden River” in Bulgarian. No such place was found on any map of Europe; results were the same for “Gold River”. Bukovina is a historical region which overlaps the present countries of Rumania and Ukraine. Based on the preceding, the minor place names of our story either have changed; or the places either no longer exist, or are completely fictitious.

A number of names have been anglicized, these are: Kashanka Kasvaya, for Kaschanka Kaswaja; Fedor Sherkevko for Fedor Scherkewko; Sovisko for Sowisko; and Gregor Vartotshko for Gregor Wartotschko.

This story may be offensive to Doukhobors, as well as to members of other religions, and to the Romani people, as it contains stereotypes.

The idea of love to be found expressed by Gregor is not very sublime, but a vast improvement on that of Kashanka's, although both view love from a personal point of view. It appears that there was a moment in the story where *philia* was shown, but in the context of the violence which was to follow, it would be best to speak of some form of *phobia*.

Certain elements in stories such as this could easily serve as models for unpardonable crimes and war-time excesses. Of course, now they are shown on the screen.

The moral may well be, in the context of the present story: if you want to join a sect, due diligence is required.

Athaliah of Zolta Reka

Not far from the border of Bukovina there is, by a steep bank of the wild, foaming River Prut: the great and rich village of Zolta Reka. There, three buildings rise above the others: the manor, whose lord had previously been the owner of the estate and the village of Zolta Reka – but who today no longer is the most distinguished of the farmers; the church, with the Greek-Catholic rectory; and the so-called holy manor, in which had lived Kashanka Kasvaya, the female head of the village and of the neighbouring region as well as of the iron-hand-ruled Doukhobors.⁸⁸ She was blasphemously known as the mother of God.⁸⁹

The seat of government of this woman had something Oriental about it. A high plank completely enclosed the old roomy house and the farm buildings. A heavy door – which contrary to the usages of the Galician peasants, was always locked – led to the manor. From outside, no windows were seen on the dwelling houses; these installations all looked out onto a small garden laid out between high walls and over the large, leafy branches of two gigantic linden-trees which spread out in the form of an almost impenetrable verdant roof.

It was a Sunday and the curious holy one of the Doukhobors was holding court and receiving her followers, when one of her apostles, Fedor Sherkevko, had a young, stately couple enter to see her.

Kashanka Kasvaya sat richly garmented and ceremoniously made up on a kind of throne. She was neither young nor beautiful, but otherwise, as to her appearance, one could

⁸⁸ This unorthodox religious grouping was accused of certain excesses, see our first reference here: The German word “*Duchoborzen*” has also been found in English publications: *The Westminster and Foreign Policy Review*, in the Foreign Literature Section, a review of “The Caucasus and the Land of The Cossacks”, [London: Groombridge and Sons; 1851], p. 272, [books.google.com /books?id=bkhDAQAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA272](https://books.google.com/books?id=bkhDAQAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA272) also see, in German: W. W. Wereschagin, trans. E. Kretschmann, *Skizzen und Erinnerungen*, [Leipzig: Taubner, 1885], p. 32: [books.google.com /books?id=oQgFAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA32](https://books.google.com/books?id=oQgFAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA32)

⁸⁹ In the original text, the noun phrase is in opposition to her name in the previous sentence, the rest of this English sentence is a contribution by the translator.

not deny that it had a certain appeal. Her squat body revealed a robust voluptuousness, and on her round brown face with the broad cheek-bones, the small nose, and the thick, pouting lips were borne the hallmarks of insatiable pleasure-seeking and brutal energy which often worked a fascinating magic upon men. The only beautiful thing about her was her large, dark eyes which looked ahead with almost diabolical cunning from under her thick, bushy eyebrows.

She mustered the arrivals attentively. The man was a well-off young farmer from the neighbouring village of Sovisko, Gregor Vartotshko: tall and slender, with a nice, fresh face, and rich, blond hair. His wife Dada was tender and melancholy in appearance – almost too delicate for a peasant farmer's wife, white and red,⁹⁰ with luxuriant black braids, and very kind blue eyes. Both of them prostrated themselves before Kashanka, with their faces to the ground, and stayed that way in silent submission, while Sherkevko, who had greeted the holy mother in the same way and who spoke for the newly-won recruits he had obtained.

Vartotshko and his wife desired admission to the society of the Doukhobors, and in answer to Kashanka's question, they confirmed that it was of their own free and firm desire that they wished to change their religious affiliation.

At Kashanka's gesture, both of them got up, but only to go nearer to her, and then, sinking down again onto their knees – in order to kiss the blood red boots of Moroccan leather.

"I will have lessons given to you," said Kashanka, "and if you, knowing our teachings exactly, will still desire to join us, we shall receive you with open arms and a fraternal kiss. Stand up."

Gregor and his wife got up and remained standing sideways, while various persons appeared one after another – to make requests, or to bring gifts to Kashanka, or to obtain her verdict in some dispute.

While this judge gave some proofs of her wisdom, her eyes roamed over to the good-looking farmer; and he too looked at her incessantly; it was only the thoughts of the two which were very dissimilar. Kashanka told herself that Gregor promised to be a very

⁹⁰ No noun is applied to this, or was she herself white and red?: *"Sein Weib Dada war eine zarte, schwermütige Erscheinung, weiß und rot, mit üppigen schwarzen Flechten und rührenden blauen Augen."*

interesting past-time for her, and he in turn thought, “So that’s the holy one, she looks just like our old milk-maid, except that she is made up like a horse for a sleigh.”

Now the young couple was taught by two old men in the doctrines of the Doukhobors, and received into their fold two weeks later. The ceremony was reminiscent of the earliest times of Christianity. Both knelt before the holy mother, who gave them a kiss of peace, then they got up and were taken around to meet those followers who were present, and everyone greeted them with a deep, authentic oriental bow, and a brotherly or sisterly kiss.

But for Gregor Vartotshko, only the outer court of the mystery had been opened.

Still on the same night, he was led by two rose-wreathed virgins into Kashanka’s chamber, which was festively decorated. She stood proudly in the middle of it, and after the two girls had left, she began to explain to Gregor, who had thrown himself at her feet, the meaning of the favours which awaited him.

“Through woman mankind lost Paradise,” she said, “that is why we Doukhobors believe that it is also only through woman that mankind can be saved, that Paradise can be won again.”

Then she gestured to Gregor to get up and pulled him to her breast. — —

As he was about to go, Kashanka tapped him lightly on the cheeks, and said:

“I like you, now I will send for you as often as I have time.”

“That would not be right,” replied Gregor, shocked.

“Do you, by chance, want to give me lessons?”

“Is it not a sin, if a married man visits a strange woman in this way?”

“You don’t understand that.”

“If you so order,” spoke Gregor, “I will come, but with a heavy heart.”

“Do you love your wife so much,” asked Kashanka, wary.

“How can I not love her, since she is so young and beautiful?”

Kashanka bit her lips.

“I see that you are a big dunce. Hurry and get out of here. March.”

Gregor left, he was very happy that he could. For some time, Kashanka did not seem to pay any attention to him, but in fact she concerned herself with him in secret. Up to now she had been accustomed to draw all of her followers to her as a tool, and to have them as slaves to her will. For the first time, she had found resistance.

This thrilled her. She began to love Gregor.

One evening, she abruptly entered his cottage, ordered his wife to serve a meal, and then sent her away while Gregor had to put up with her company. However, when she began to kiss him – tenderness he looked upon as a misfortune to be avoided – he quietly but with badly disguised reluctance accepted.

“Do you by any chance believe that I have come to show you my favours, which you have not earned? I am only here to punish you for your sins. I am looking deeply into your heart, and how little pure it is! Kneel down, I want to help you to do penance.”

He sank to his knees, she had him say the penitential psalm, and after that, on her command, having cast his face to the ground, she kicked him with her feet, shouting as she did so, “I’ll improve you yet, you self-important man, you shall come crawling to me like a dog.”

Although she had sated her anger, that wild hatred that comes from unrequited love, the demonic desire to possess Gregor, to win his love, grew within her day by day.

Hussars came to be quartered in the village, and in the manor – officers. The latter got bored beyond anything imaginable, and so it happened that one day curiosity led the cavalry captain, a sun-tanned chivalrous Hungarian, into the house of the holy mother. One word led to another; finally Kashanka spoke, while a malicious smile played on her full lips. “Sir, what are you complaining about, that there is nothing to do to pass the time? There are very beautiful women here. Tomorrow at supper, you will find one of the most beautiful of them here with me.”

The following evening the cavalry captain did indeed come, and he met Gregor’s wife, Dada, whom Kashanka had ordered to appear through a messenger. “Now you will have the opportunity to prove,” said the despot of the Doukhobors quietly to her, “that you are fully dedicated with all your heart to our teachings. It is your task to win this man for us.”

The poor woman blushed and balked, but this did not help her any, Kashanka commanded and even threatened, and finally Dada complied; and the captain, without any ceremony, began to court her favour, and he found that she lent him her ears faster than he had considered possible.

A few months passed. It was winter: Nature wrapped herself proudly in its snowy fur coat. One night, a fanatical Red Doukhobor woman stormed into the village of Sovisko, penetrated into Gregor's house, and demanded that the adulteress be handed over to her.⁹¹

"Of whom are you speaking?" asked Gregor, astounded.

"Of your wife," answered a hundred voices, all at the same time.

The unfortunate Dada, shaking in mortal fear, was dragged out of the house. A garland of straw was put on her, and a heavy stone hung from her neck, then the group began to sing a holy song in unison, while simultaneously, stones began to be thrown from all sides at Kashanka's poor victim.

Crying, Dada fled through the village, followed by the angry mob, until finally she expired, sinking down onto the steps of a tavern.⁹²

As is almost always true in such cases of peasant lynch justice in Galicia, the investigation uncovered nothing, and the murderers remained unpunished.

Some time after the death of his wife Kashanka came to Sovisko and into Gregor's cottage. "Well, now," she began sarcastically, "perhaps you will love me now?"

"I fear you," answered Gregor, "more than that you cannot ask for."

"In that case, in the future, you shall at least have the opportunity to tremble before me," shouted Kashanka. "You won't get rid of me that easily, but I'll deal with you!"

Already on the next day four Doukhobors brought the poor Gregor, bound hands and feet, thrown onto a sleigh, to Zolta Reka. Kashanka was waiting for him in front of her house, proud and sinister like an insulted tyrant.

⁹¹ The meaning of "Red Doukhobor" is unknown. If it were not capitalized, it could mean "ruddy".

⁹² We have seen a similar unbelievable event in the story of "The Noble Red Manor". At the time that Sacher-Masoch wrote this, the Doukhobors still drank alcoholic beverages, according to *Wikipedia*.

Her dark face with the glowering eyes took on a gypsy-like wildness, because of the blood-red cloth wound around her head. She wore red boots on her feet and down to the ankles she was wrapped in a large black fur, upon which the large red corals which she wore around her neck glistened like drops of blood.

At a nod, Gregor was lifted from the sleigh and brought into an empty barn where she held court over him.

“Are you sorry for your sin?” she asked coldly.

“Which one? I have more than one on my conscience”, replied the accused.

“The sin which you have committed against the commandment of love.”

“Do you want to punish me for your not being young and beautiful,” replied Gregor.

Now the verdict was given ...

“Hear how he abuses me,” said Kashanka, anger in her deformed face, “but you shall also see how this slanderer will be punished.”

She had a crown of thorns put upon Gregor’s forehead, and with his face to the ground, he was thrown upon a bed of thorny twigs; and while his face and body were cut up by the thorns so that warm blood dripped to the ground, four strong men began to scourge him.

For a long time the sufferer bore this unheard-of torment quietly and without complaint – with that stoic patience Galician peasants are famed for. Kashanka stood by with cruel joy, encouraging the Doukhobors not to slacken in their task.

“Do you repent?” she finally asked, “do you promise to improve?”

“Oh, just now the scales from my eyes,” replied Gregor. “I see that you are not a holy one, but that you yourself are the greatest sinner – you, Athalia of Zolta Reka!”

“This is apostasy from our belief,” murmured Kashanka, grinding her teeth, “This wretch, blinded by the devil, is in condition to poison our entire community of believers, to promote error about the eternal joys of Paradise. He must die! Put an end to him!”

She called two other fanatics, who with long nagaikas with ends filled with lead, came by and began to beat the victim of the new Athalia. After only a few strokes Gregor seemed to groan and finally to cry out loud.

While the Doukhobors were singing a penitential song, Kashanka stood there quietly and motionless, except that a horrible smile of satisfaction was playing on her voluptuous lips. Not until the poor victim had uttered his last groan was her demonic desire for revenge sated.

* * * *

For another year the strange holy one of Zolta Reka carried on her foul works without being punished.

Then another bloody crime occurred, and this time a court succeeded in obtaining evidence which made it possible to bring charges against Kashanka Kasvaya and more than 20 others of her followers for a murder brought about by inflicting mortal blows.

Kashanka was way too clever to have any illusions about her fate. After the final hearing, she knew all was lost.

One morning, she was found stretched out, dead on her bed.

Her followers believed that she had been murdered in the dungeon, and up to this very day, honour her as a martyr and a holy woman.

January 15, 2022

Translation © 2022 by Paul Karl Moeller

All web references are of January 15, 2022.

Zweiter Teil

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This page incorporates the content of 3 separate pages: "Zweiter Teil" pre-cedes "Inhalt" (in the original book) by two pages, the Cupid is on the page left of "Zweiter Teil".

The Cupid is in the public domain.

Original reworking by:
Paul Karl Moeller

Part 2

His Rival's Slave

Translator's Introduction

The title of this story, as given above, is a literal translation of the German, "*Der Sklave seines Nebenbuhlers*".

The violence in this tale does not reach the level found in some of the previous ones; it limits itself to that which was administered by the Romans in the pre-crucifixion phase, as can be found in the Christian bible.

This story may be offensive to Turks and Moslems, as it may contain stereotypes. It may also be objected to by women in particular, though not exclusively, on the basis of the finality of the sentenced passed upon one of the two women in this story. On the other hand, it may paint a discriminating picture of people who are in the service of others.

The name "Pasha Omar", or its German equivalent, "*Pascha Omar*", should be considered that of a fictitious person. Unfortunately, real people with this name and title existed. Here, the author of the book did not manage to create a pseudo-Turkish word, as had been done in many of the previous stories; rather, the Western stereotyped characterization of what is Turkish seems to have come to the fore. From the historical point of view, this *could* be understandable, as Turkey had tried to conquer Vienna twice in the past.

The name *Suleima* has been changed to Zulema, as the "z" corresponds to the German "s". It is also the form which gets the most results in a search engine on the Internet.

The palace which is described here would have been built in a very careless manner, for the Pasha did not seem aware of the opportunities it provided to his wife, unless she had so much power, that she herself could have made some secret modifications. The reader might want to think about how plausible it would be that there were secret passages known only to the wife.

The word “mistress” in this story is exclusively used in the sense of a woman who has command over another or something, as “the mistress of the house”. It is not used in a demeaning sense. The German term, *Herrin*, allows for no double meaning. It will be this *Herrin*, whom we will soon meet in the following relation, much before the *Herr*, the rival of a person we will meet in the opening paragraph.

His Rival’s Slave

It was the year 1842. The merchant vessel *Aurora*⁹³ had been badly damaged due to bad weather on its last voyage, and had lain for weeks now in the port of a large city on the Danube for repairs. As the repairs would presumably take up some time, the commander of the ship, Captain Margovic, had taken lodgings in the city in order to be closer to the pleasures of that place, and to be able to enjoy these in greater comfort. The windows of his dwelling looked out into a small, lonely alley, and the house opposite was the back building of a Turkish palace, the dwelling of a high official. This building, towards its front, faced a large, wide street.

Captain Margovic, who on his many trips had become acquainted with all the customs and arrangements of the Turks, did not take long in coming to the conviction that he was opposite the harem of the official. The captain was a fine-looking man, and was successful with the ladies. He knew from experience how readily the Turkish women, languishing in the hot air of the harem, were disposed to give a peak at their beauty to the Europeans, in spite of the great dangers that were connected with such a small pleasure.

Margovic, who had been fortunate in every adventure up to now, had found himself in the city for several weeks at this point, and still no pretty woman’s eye had smiled promisingly at him. Sometimes he did see, in the window opposite, forms which seemed to watch him, but it was impossible for him to recognize more than a general outline of a female body through the small latticed window. Upset over his bad luck, he spent more time than usual on the public plazas and streets.

⁹³ Of the many vessels named *Aurora*, none in the *Wikipedia* list would seem to be the one mentioned here, unless it were British. Such an assumption does not fit in with the captain’s surname. Ref.: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ships_named_Aurora

One day he came to a Turkish cemetery. It occurred to him to enter, but as he wanted to do so, a couple of cavasses⁹⁴ forbade it. An empty sedan-chair stood there, and Margovic knew immediately that a distinguished Turkish lady probably was praying at one of the graves, or, had allowed herself to be transported here for a few hours to get away from the boredom of the harem; and in this manner to find the opportunity to see, while going along the route – at least from a distance – some virile foreigner.

Curiosity, and the desire for an adventure, induced Margovic to forget all about caution. His keen eyes had quickly found a spot in the wall surrounding the cemetery, which would be easy to climb over; and he decided to do this hastily, without being seen by anyone.

He was not mistaken. From a distance, he saw the white veil of a Turkish lady through the green of the flowers and trees. Carefully, he drew closer. The woman had pulled her veil back, and the captain saw a beautiful, pale face and two dark, sensuously-glowing eyes. This was a vision of genuine oriental beauty. Margovic knew this kind of woman, who was always ready to meet a foreigner half-way, so he did not take long in coming to a decision. Since he was fully proficient in the Turkish language, he approached her, greeted her politely, and began a conversation with her.

At first, this conversation did not get into full swing; the lady was either very suspicious, or very careful; but Margovic knew how to dispel her doubts, and soon he knew that her name was Zulema, and that she was the wife of Omar Pasha, the owner of the palace which had the harem facing the quarters of the captain's lodgings. Maybe it had been Zulema who had watched him daily behind the latticed windows; if that was so, he could well find favour with the lady. For the clever captain, experienced in such waters,* it was not difficult to obtain information on this matter. Anyway, Zulema did not hinder his investigation very much, and soon he had obtained concessions of her, which, for the time being only ended by her promising to give him the opportunity of seeing her again; for all that, this confirmed the presumption that he was sure of the lady's favour.

As Margovic wanted to leave her, she picked a flower which was nearby, and handed it over to him with the comment that he could trust and follow the person who would ask for its return.

⁹⁴ An armed Ottoman Turkish guard or police officer. Spellings vary, the British form has been used, see: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kavass>

* Metaphor by Sacher-Masoch.

By the same treacherous route that he had used in arriving, the captain left. As he came to the entrance gate, Zulema was just climbing into her sedan-chair, and in passing by, he caught a much-promising glance from her eyes.

A few days elapsed, without him hearing any news of his conquest; then, one evening, as he was stepping out of a Turkish coffee-house, an old woman asked him for alms. He gave her a handful of small change, but she remained standing in front of him expectantly, so that he asked her impatiently, what else it was that she wanted.

“Sir,” she said humbly, “you have a flower, and if you give it to me, you will be happy.”

“I will only give you the flower,” replied Margovic, “if you lead me to the place where I will be happy.”

The old lady smiled with cunning, and invited him to follow her. She led him into the street in which he lived, and almost immediately under his windows, she knocked silently and carefully upon a small gate which was found there. After a while, it opened; the woman shoved the captain inside and then disappeared into the darkness. A soft, warm hand took his, and led him through several dark rooms into a small, cozy one, which, despite merely partial illumination, gave the aspect of having only been made as a shelter for clandestine love. He recognized Zulema by the dim light of the lamp, who still held his hand in hers, and who was looking at him affectionately.

As long as the ship lay in harbour, the captain often came this way to the beautiful wife of Omar Pasha, but when the vessel was fully restored and ready to sail off, he had to promise her, that as soon as his travels led him again to the same port, that he would inform her through a pre-arranged sign; upon receiving it, she would promptly give him the opportunity of seeing her again.

Margovic kept his promise, and even if it was only once or twice a year, and although he would be only in the city for a short time, he always knew how to arrange things so that he could meet Zulema.

Once, however, almost two years passed without her hearing anything of the captain's existence. She had almost given up all hope of reencountering him, when, one day, she received news of his arrival. Zulema rejoiced. She called her old, trusted slave,

and ordered her to help her with her appearance, since she wanted to receive her lover looking as wonderful as possible.

The old lady did as was ordered, but whether it was maliciousness or clumsiness – whatever – she could not please her mistress; or maybe Zulema had become aware of having become older since the last tryst, and this discovery irritated her impatience and incited her all the more to conceal, by the arts of beautifying the body, the unpleasant changes wrought by aging.

But the more assiduously she attempted to repair the damage through artificial means, the less success she had.

The apathy and the sluggishness of the old servant, who ruined more with her trembling hands than she helped, stirred the anger of her mistress to the highest degree; but when the slave even let fall a flask of good-smelling essence, so that its contents spilled over the white, gold-sewn slippers that Zulema wanted to wear, anger turned to rage – she gave the old lady a kick, so that the slave fell to the floor, and because of the splinters of glass of the broken bottle, hurt her face.

The slave said nothing – humbly she crawled around her angry mistress and out through the door.

Zulema completed the unfinished work alone, and this must have gone well in hiding the ravages of caused by time, because Margovic was as loving and fiery as during the first years of their relationship.

The lovers were just speaking intimately, when the door opened and Omar Pasha, wearing a fur of red ermine, stepped in; as handsome as an angry god. He was followed by two slaves, in addition to the trusted one of his wife.

The old slave had betrayed her mistress in revenge, and wanted to be present when the faithless wife was punished by her husband.

Margovic never went to a rendezvous with the beautiful Turk without carrying a weapon on him, but this time the attack came swiftly and unexpectedly; before he could pull out his dagger, he was overpowered by the slaves, and bound hand and foot.

Zulema was pale and fled trembling into a corner. Her husband, without saying a word, stepped towards her, grabbed her by her long hair, and swung her with a single

movement into the middle of the room. The slaves already knew what they had to do; and as Omar Pasha sat down with the greatest peace of mind on the ottoman upon which only a few minutes before, the lovers had enjoyed themselves, the slaves gagged the beautiful wife who was trembling in fear of death, such that no sound could come from her. They stuck her in a sack which had been held ready, and left the room as silently as they had come in. With a smile of satisfaction upon her full lips, they were followed by the old slave lady.

Zulema had already prepared a magnificent water-pipe for her lover; Omar Pasha stood up, lit the tobacco, and sat again with crossed legs, threw open his fur, with the bound captain facing him. With ease, as if the captain were the most pleasing company, he blew the light blue smoke in front of him, directly into Margovic's face.

Thus passed half an hour. Then the slaves entered again.

Now the pasha laid his pipe aside, looked at the prisoner and said calmly and mockingly, as if this was a diplomatic negotiation, the personal interests of which he laid no claim to, "My good sir, perhaps you expected me to kill you like this woman who has shamed my house, but you are mistaken; death would be your wished-for punishment, and too easy. I will let you live, but as my slave. Do you want to tell me, if you will obligingly accept your fate, or if you will force me to make clear to you by violent means, what your new position is?"

The dark red of anger coloured the captain's face as he heard the captain's words, and he explained, that he would never humiliate himself so much.

A sarcastic smile and a gesture given to the slaves was the only answer to the captain's declaration. The slaves jumped upon the unfortunate man; in a wink he was undressed down to his hips, and now they began to scourge him with whips having steel-pointed ends.⁹⁵

For a longtime, although every lash cut deep into his flesh, and blood had begun to flow no cry of pain escaped from the lips of the captain, but the pasha lost his patience even less, and merely nodded his head from time to time towards his slaves, in order to give them encouragement.

⁹⁵ Probably the nagaika, referred to in two previous stories. This may possibly suggest that the present story was written earlier.

Little by little, the unfortunate man began to whimper, to groan, and finally, to give out a loud cry.

“Will you resign yourself to my demand?” the pasha asked.

The captain gave no answer, and the scourging began anew.

“Have mercy,” the victim finally implored, already more dead than alive.

“Do you see that I am your master, who can do as I please?” said the pasha, “and will you henceforth readily offer your neck to my foot?”

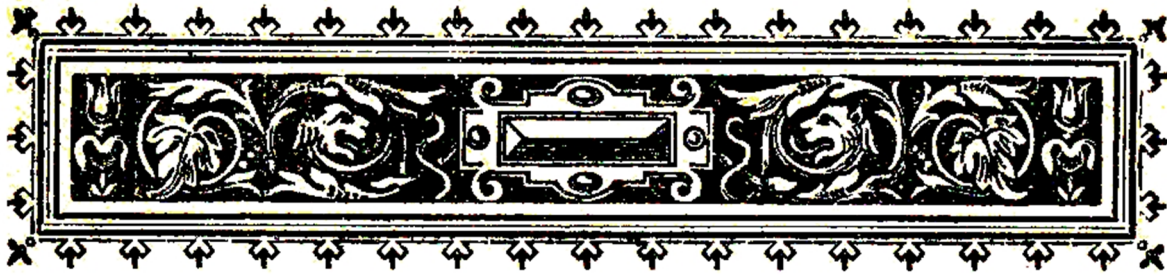
“I want to be your slave,” answered the captain.

“Then come here to my feet,” replied the pasha; and as the captain, now fully broken, sank before him, the latter extended a foot from under his luxurious ermine fur; and as the wretch, submitting as a beaten dog, pressed his lips to that foot, there played upon the handsome face of his master a smile of horrible satisfaction.

January 17, 2022

Translation © 2022 by Paul Karl Moeller

All web references are of January 17, 2022.



A Campfire

Translator's Introduction

The following story is rather simple, but shows that the author was versed in some history of her country – or better put – the empire of which her country was a part. As a Hungarian, she shows her antipathy, we might guess, to all countries which deny independence to the same, and she shows the same empathy towards the Poles.

The translation for the most part is extremely simple, as might even befit the narration of the officer who does most of the talking. However, we allow that as an aristocrat he might have had a higher education, and thus include the occasional elegant word in his vocabulary.

An uninterrupted part of a long narration has been set apart, as the full use of quotation marks in that section otherwise becomes unwieldy.

A Campfire

It was the night before a battle during the General Bem's⁹⁶ equally bloody and heroic military campaign, in which he drove the Russians out of Transylvania. As in the last hour before one's death, the same time before a battle made individuals talkative. The Hungarian and Polish officers had stretched themselves out on their greatcoats by a campfire, the bottle of brandy made its rounds, and each individual related more or less

⁹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J%C3%B3zsef_Bem

completely a tale or a significant scene of his lifetime. Just one of the men remained an untalkative nonparticipant in this exchange of narratives. He was a rittmeister of the Polish Uhlans, Pan Wistetsky⁹⁷. He sat withdrawn and contemplative, apart from the others, and his blue eyes fixed themselves almost spectrally upon the red flames which licked at and fluttered high over the chunky pieces of the campfire's wood.

"Well, then, Camil," started to say one of his compatriots, "and you, you have nothing to tell us? I imagine, you have the most on your mind of all of us, and that your story must be the most interesting."

"Maybe, and maybe not."

"Just tell us, and let us decide!"

"Yes, yes, just let us hear," shouted the Hungarians.

"But my story is neither amusing nor cheerful," stated Wistetsky. "What's more, it is one of those which one prefers to keep to himself."

"Just as I guessed it," declared the other Pole, "it's a sad story that you keep bottled up inside of you, but do you also want to have it buried with you? Who can tell whom the Russian shots will spare tomorrow?"

"You're right."

"Then tell the story!"

"Yes, do."

"So be it!" Wistetsky threw away the cigar, nudged himself closer to the campfire, and began:

"It has not been long, since I have been married."

"You're married?"

"Please do not interrupt me, or I will lose the thread. I am not a good story-teller."

⁹⁷ Pan: a Polish honorific, Sir or Lord. The spelling of last name Anglicized, possibly a deliberate alteration of a nobleman named Wisniowski, cf. www.personal.ceu.hu/students/97/Roman_Zakharii/history.htm, search 1846]. (Translation, reference, but to male author, creating doubt as to authorship, and one of only 3 results for Wistetzki: https://hrvatski--vojn timer-hr.translate.google.com/translate?hl=es&tr_pto=sc).

“And so?”

My wife - I just want to mention her by her baptismal name - Wilka - was a child as I led her to the altar. One claimed that she was charming and graceful; one prized her spirit, her heart, and even a young poet sang her praises in verse. I don't know if she is beautiful, I loved her so much that I was blind, and cannot judge. Two years passed without God blessing us with a child; we came even closer to one another, and dedicated our troubles and all our strength to our motherland, which at that time tried once again to regain its lost freedom and independence. It is clear that a Pole – and also a Magyar - is a good patriot, and would not hesitate for a second to offer and dedicate his all – all that he possesses, including his life, for the beloved land which bore him.

We actively took part in the conjuration and the preparations for the 1846 revolution.⁹⁸ The emissaries from the Centralization, which at that time called itself the National Regime in Paris, went in and out of our house all the time. We had arms and munitions hidden in our manor; my wife prepared bandages and made cartridges.

It so happened in that ill-fated February of 1846, in which the nobility of Galicia raised the Polish flag simultaneously in the entire country, but was not in condition to have the people rally round the same; for the peasantry took their scythes and flails against us and ignited another slave war⁹⁹ under the leadership of the Galician Spartacus, Jacob Szyrla.¹⁰⁰ Thousands of nobles, together with their families and servants, were killed by this group, their estates torched, - well, enough about that. The eastern part of the country was spared of these horrors, a few insurgent bands which had formed here were dispersed by the peasants or soldiers, but no bloodbath originated with the country folk. My estate and my life were

⁹⁸ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_Poland_uprising_\(1846\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_Poland_uprising_(1846)); see also footnote 85, page 87.

⁹⁹ books.google.com/books?id=wgOxCwAAQBAJ&pg=PA25

¹⁰⁰ name may be fictitious, as it was not found

spared, but I myself had taken part in the battle by Narayev,¹⁰¹ and had to flee, otherwise I would have had to take a little walk to the Spielberg¹⁰².

At last, I crossed happily over the Carpathians towards Hungary and kept myself hidden amongst friends at Szigeth¹⁰³. A year passed by. My wife, who during this period administered the estate, wrote me tender letters. Day by day, the desire within me grew to be able to see her again, even if it were for a few hours, and to be able to press upon her lips a kiss – a single one.

It was in March of 1947 that I, disguised as a Polish Jew, returned to Galicia upon a Jewish-owned horse-drawn dray.

I wanted to fully surprise my wife, who had no idea about my return. One of those dedicated and faithful both to my family and to me personally - an innkeeper - took me in, and hid me in a small backroom. The inn was only two hours away from my land. I waited until dark, mounted my horse, and headed thereto on a byway. As I, by the unsteady pale light of the lunar crescent and the stars finally espied the well-known poplars, the roof of the homestead, the great stork's nest, and the long-handled draw well which stood like a ghost upon the Steppe, my heart throbbed mightily, and tears gushed from my eyes. I needed quite a while in order to get a hold of myself again; then I dismounted, tied my horse to a willow tree, and slunk through the courtyard to my small single-storey house. Both large, white wolfhounds bounded towards me with angry bellowing, but recognized me immediately, and began to whine with pleasure, to jump upon me, and to lick my hands.

I saw my old Stephan afoot, who came towards me with mussed-up hair, protecting the candle-flame with his hand, and who let out a cry and fell to my feet. I embraced him, and lifted him up. "Is my wife at home?" I asked quietly.

¹⁰¹ spelt Narajow and Narayiv at www.personal.ceu.hu/students/97/Roman_Zakharii/history.htm, search for 1846

¹⁰² "considered the harshest prison in the Austrian Empire: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%A0pilberk_Castle] or Kufstein [see last sentence of this article: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kufstein_Fortress.

¹⁰³ possibly Szigetvár or Siget (modern German spelling, as well as Croatian (westernized), cf. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Szigetv%C3%A1r>

“Certainly,” answered the astonished old servant. “Where else might she be?”

“Is she sleeping?”

“How would it be that she is not? It is close to midnight.”

“Close the gate, old man, and then, go and rest.”

“As you command.”

“I’ll be safe here for a few hours, won’t I?” I asked. A certain unease had come over me, similar to an evil premonition.

The old man scratched his head. “Whichever way you take it,” he replied, “we have men billeted here.”

“In the house?”

“A rittmeister in the house, and in the village, part of his squadron.”

“Hussars?”

“No, Swabians – cuirassiers.”¹⁰⁴

“In that case, I’ll stay awake,” said I, “and warn me, as soon as you notice anything suspicious.”

“Rest easy, sire,” interjected my faithful servant, “they may as well hack me to pieces, but no one may touch even a hair of your body.”

“Is the German here in the house,” I asked.

“No, he is in the garden shed, and his servant in the stall together with the horses.”

Stephan departed, and I stepped softly into my wife’s room. On tiptoe I approached the canopied bed with the intent of awakening Wilka with a kiss, but found it empty. A sudden fright took hold of me, it cost me some effort to keep myself upright. Once I had gotten my self-control back

¹⁰⁴ Swabian: inhabitant of Swabia, an independent state within the German Confederation of that time, preceding unification under Bismarck in 1870.]

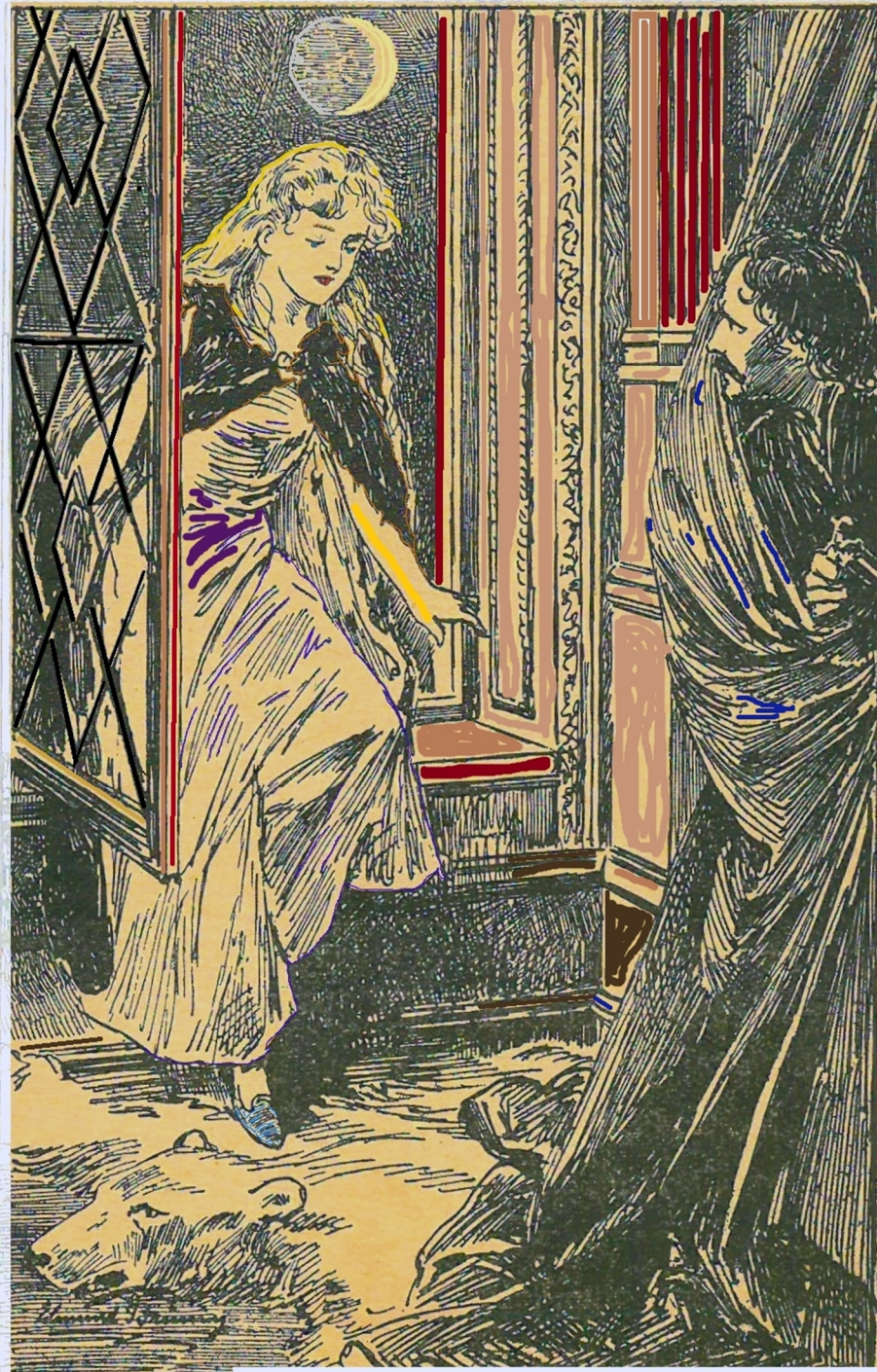
again to some extent, I went to the window and drew back the drapes; the window was open – though only slightly ajar. It was starting to dawn.¹⁰⁵ Wilka had gone through this window – for what purpose? The window led to the garden. If she? – I dared not let my thinking come to a final conclusion.

Now the room was lit up a bit by the lunar crescent. I drew my pistols, checked to see that they were loaded, and then hid myself behind the dark, heavy drapes of the canopied bed. I do not know how long I stood there – it seemed to be an eternity.

Finally there was a soft noise at the window. Wilka, beautiful as a Carpathian fairy, stepped into the room; she wore a long, dark fur slippers on her feet, her blond hair loosened, and hanging onto her shoulders. As I stepped forward, she gave a start.

Continues on page following illustration.

¹⁰⁵ There may possibly be a double meaning in this sentence, with the unfinished idea, “on him.”



Colorized by Paul Karl Moeller. This colorized version © 2022 Paul Karl Moeller

„Wilka, schön wie eine Karpathenelfe, stieg in das
Zimmer herein.“

*“Wilka, beautiful as a Carpathian fairy,
stepped into the room”*

Translation © 2022, Paul Karl Moeller

“Who’s there?” she asked in a trembling voice.

“It is I, Wilka.”

“You?” mumbled Wilka, as she supported herself on the window sill, in order not to sink to the floor.

“You’re not flying into my arms?” I asked scornfully, “I had thought to pleasantly surprise you.”

“Indeed, you have surprised me,” she replied.

“So I see.”

“Camil, my Camil,” she suddenly cried out now, and tenderly wrapped her arms around me.

“What’s this? No comedy!”

“Do you doubt my love?” she asked. Her entire body trembled.

I began my interrogation. “Where were you?” As she remained speechless, I continued: “Shall I tell you where?”

“No, no.”

“You won’t deny that you are guilty?”

“Forgive me, my love, have mercy on me,” she now cried out, and fell to my feet.

“No, Wilka, I cannot forgive you,” I replied, “for the faithlessness, which you have shown towards me, I could possibly forgive you, because I love you; but never can I, and never will I forgive treason to the Motherland. Can you not yourself feel the ignominy that you have brought over me and yourself when you sacrificed your husband to the enemy of our country? No, woman; that I cannot forgive, you will pay for that, and indeed, in this very place.”

I drew the pistols, and cocked them.

“For crying out loud,” stammered Wilka, “you don’t intend to kill me? Are you out of your mind?”

“No, I’m quite sane.”

“No, you will not kill me, you’ll forgive,” she mumbled.

“Certainly I shall kill you,” I gave as an answer. “Pray, reconcile yourself with God.”

“Mercy, Camil, mercy!”

“Pray!”

At that moment, old Stephan, a candle in his hand, stepped into the room. My wife lifted herself up, and I hid the pistols.

“Be quiet,” said the faithful servant, “we’re all lost, if the Swabians wake up!”

“I thank you,” said I, “I’ll be quiet forthwith, but leave me alone with my wife.”

“At the moment that Stephan turned to go, my wife, having made an instantaneous decision, rushed towards him, blew out the candle, and taking advantage of the sudden darkness, jumped out of the window. Before I had understood what had happened, I heard the hoofbeats of a horse, and my wife had disappeared. As I later discovered, she had, attired just as she was, swung herself up on an unsaddled horse, and galloped off. She did not return. Since then, no one has seen her, no one has heard from her.

I thereupon went to the garden shed to the rittmeister, a German baron. Stephan led the way with a lantern.

The German was a bit surprised as we woke him up, and turned crimson when I mentioned my name. He immediately understood what my visit was about, and so we exchanged few words.

He donned his uniform, and we went into the garden. Old, honest Stephan served as a witness.

We took up our positions, just ten paces from one another.

Stephan gave the signal, and two shots rang out. The German fell to the ground.

He had died instantly. Without further ado, I clambered over the garden fence, swung into my horse's saddle, and galloped away. The night favoured my flight. Once again, I crossed safely over the border into Hungary.

When in March of 1848 a general amnesty was given, I returned to my homeland. I found my property, which Stephan had administered in the meantime, in a considerably forlorn state. My wife had disappeared, and has remained so.

As much as the double unfaithfulness towards me and the motherland had wounded me, my love for her dominated me completely – indeed, there arose within me a type of passion, an agonizing mental suffering. I was incapable of working peacefully. After vainly trying to administer my estate for a few months, to find solace and healing in ordered activity, I began to look for that closure in the wider world, and threw myself anew and at the same time into the arms of the revolution. I fought at the barricades in Dresden and Prague; then, in October, in Vienna, and finally, like many of my compatriots, took off towards Hungary.

Even today I love my wife, I love her madly, and only death will loosen the bond that ties me to her.

Wistetsky became silent at this moment, and all the others remained so.

Dawn arrived. Bem's small army got into position for battle. The Russians accepted the idea of fighting, and deployed their troops. The Russian general was seen riding through endless rows on a white horse to harangue his men. At that, the old artillerist awoke within Bem. He himself aimed the cannon at the hostile army leader, and shot it off at him. On the Hungarian side, the effect of the shot was seen most precisely. The Russian general, together with his horse, tumbled to the ground, and the former was led away on a litter made of rifles. Another general thereupon took supreme command.

The battle began. Both sides fought bravely and doggedly, nevertheless, by sundown, the Russians were fully defeated and began to withdraw.

As Wistetsky returned with his Uhlans in the middle of the night from the pursuit of the enemy, in the vicinity of a Russian cannon confiscated by the Polish legion, he heard a soft moaning. He dismounted and approached the wounded man, with the intention of offering assistance. It was a Russian officer who was wrestling with death and with a painful smile, gave thanks for the help.

“It was a Pole, almost a child, who thrust the bayonet into my chest,” he mumbled, “he hit me well. Nevertheless, I regret having killed him. He lies over there.”

Wistetsky leant over the dead body which was lit ghost-like by the moon, let loose a cry, and sank over the corpse. It was that of his wife, who here, on the field of honour, had fallen for her motherland and for freedom, and had atoned for her error, in the manner of a true Polish woman.

Translation © 2021, Paul Karl Moeller

Final web version published December 18, 2021.

All references were accessed between December 13 and 18, 2021.

Lady Tarnavka

Translator’s Introduction

Lady Tarnavka, in the original German text, was written *Frau Tarnawka*. The surname has been changed in order to maintain the “v” pronunciation of the German “w”; while *Frau* should not be translated as “Mrs.”, because it is the short form for *Edelfrau*, the translation of which is given in our title. For the purposes of euphony, her husband’s name Michal has been changed to Michael.

This story lacks violence, unless someone sympathizes with wolves which are shot for stealing chickens as a source of food. There is a happy-ever-after ending, one case of a sentence imitating “[i]t was a dark and stormy night”, and two incredibly long sentences

which the translator decide to keep that way, to reflect Sacher-Masoch's style. On another plane, this tale completely varies from the intentions stated in the "Foreword".

Celia: ... my sweet rose, my dear Rose, be merry.

Rosalind: From henceforth I will, coz, and devise sports. Let me see; what think you of falling in love?

*Celia: Marry, I pr'ythee, do, to make sport withal: but love no man in good earnest; ...*¹⁰⁶

*... if they will not empty the forbidden cup, they like at least a sip from it, or lick the brim, just to see what poison tastes like ...*¹⁰⁷

Lady Tarnavka

In the manor of Lord Michael Tarnavka, things were always merrily swinging. The proximity of the small district city in which a large garrison was located invariably provided the hospitable lord with the cheerful company of officers; but what made the small manor house even more attractive for the gay hussars continually swarming in and out was its beautiful woman herself, Lady Florentina Tarnavka, from whose cheerful, twinkling eyes the visitors could always have the conviction that they were welcome guests. Not only were there in her house the most excellent wines and a table always well-laid, but she also understood how to supplement these never despised prerequisites with kindness; and to spice things up with piquant conversation, so that no one could resist her; the most-celebrated woman in the area. From the youngest lieutenant to the colonels, all lay at her feet, and she accepted the many offered homages with cheerful humour; indeed, she often smiled sympathetically when one or the other took these things too seriously and had allowed himself to be totally tied up by the snares of her beauty.

Florentina loved her husband, she loved her house and her housekeeping; but she also loved pleasure; and because she did not live among high society, she attempted to

¹⁰⁶ Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Intro. Henry N. Hudson, Act I, Scene 2, [Boston: Ginn & Co., 1895], p. 37, books.google.com/books?id=jtcVAAAAYAAJ, accessed February 9, 2022; German version: Heinrich Heine, *"Shakspeare's Mädchen und Frauen"*, op. cit. *"Rosalinde"*, p. 470.

¹⁰⁷ The Works of Heinrich Heine (1906) by Heinrich Heine, translated by Charles Godfrey Leland Shakespeare's Maidens and Women, *"Cleopatra"*, line 303; Heine, *"Shakspeare's Mädchen und Frauen"* (op. cit.): *"Cleopatra"*, p. 417

derive as much enjoyment as possible from her small, domesticity-loving circle, and so her house became the gathering place of all the men in the vicinity.

She had no children; her husband was of a quiet, phlegmatic nature who allowed his wife to do as she pleased. What was more natural than her allowing herself to be courted; and since her husband appeared to have no predisposition to behaving as an Othello,¹⁰⁸ and who furthermore did not notice – or did not want to – the dangers surrounding his young and beautiful wife, it was thus that she believed herself to be doing no wrong by accepting the homages that were brought to her from all sides; and thus, once she had tasted the sin which tempted her, she found even more zest in the sweet poison, and always sinned anew.

Despite this, it did not occur to Florentina to neglect her husband; on the contrary, the more she dedicated herself to the joys of life, the more she consciously complied with her duties towards her husband and her household. To compensate him for her unfaithfulness, she saw to his wishes and habits more than ever. She worked hard at sharing the burden of the worries of the estate's economy with him, and fearfully sought to keep him from anything which could anger or excite him – and if finally there was an annoyance, she was the negotiator, and she was always successful in getting the problem out of his mind through her soft, warm hand.

Thus it came about that her marriage was considered a model one.¹⁰⁹ Although visitors to her house knew that every time the handsome, fiery rittmeister of hussars, Roman Brabinski left the manor; he would turn back to it somewhat behind that building, give his horse to his servant lurking there, take off his spurs, softly and surreptitiously make his return through the garden up to the window of Lady Tarnavka at which the gardener regularly left the small ladder used in his work, and easily swing himself inside the chamber of the lovely lady – the harmony of the two spouses was not disturbed, and it occurred to no one to undermine it.¹¹⁰

It was a beautiful cold winter; Michael was sitting with several gentlemen in a corner of the rather large salon, playing whist; while Florentina stretched her beautiful legs and arms in the fur-lined snugly-fitting kazabaika¹¹¹ while sitting in a fauteuil by the

¹⁰⁸ A Shakespearean character in the play of the same name. He came to hate the woman he loved after feeling betrayed by her.

¹⁰⁹ This idea has already been seen in "A Lady of the Congress".

¹¹⁰ Translated as the long sentence found in the original text.

¹¹¹ Fur-lined Polish-Galician jacket, more at note 84, page 85

fireside. Behind her sat Rittmeister Brabinski, whispering sweet words to her; from time to time she smiled over her shoulder, while her small feet warmed themselves from the warm glow of the fire-place. Only two candles were burning in the room, and these stood immediately near the card table, so that the rest of the room was almost shrouded in total darkness, and the two persons at the fireplace could converse quite freely. Suddenly, from outside, a frightful noise was heard, upon which a servant rushed into the room to announce that wolves had come through the garden and overrun the poultry-yard. The gentlemen leapt up immediately and dashed out. The lord of the manor asked for his gun, the servant gave it to him. Florentina, flung her round arms about him and said, "Don't go, Michael, harm might come to you. It is very cold outside; your rheumatism might act up again."

At this moment, the rittmeister entered again. When he saw with what tenderness she was clinging around the neck of her husband, he twisted his long moustache in anger. The beautiful woman did not at all notice his jealous agitation; she was only interested in protecting her husband from catching a cold.

The other gentlemen also stepped in again. The wolves had fled with their prey; it was no longer possible to think of pursuing them at this moment. It was agreed to lie in wait for them the following evening and to receive them with guns a-blazing.

The gentlemen left. Brabinski hoped that Florentina would show some concern for his safety. It was, of course possible that he too, on his ride home would meet wolves. However, Florentina behaved during the farewell as if she considered these beasts to be the most innocent animals in the world, and there remained nothing for the rittmeister to do but to go the long way home, further twisting his moustache and contemplating the puzzling nature of the woman.

The following night the men split up in the garden and the farmyard, all well-armed, awaiting the appearance of the wolves with close attention. Florentina's flattering again succeeded in keeping her husband from the action; his well-being was the most important thing for her, and she was afraid that he could catch cold through the severe low temperature; but Michael insisted upon watching the hunt from a window swung open into the building. Carefully all the lights in the room were extinguished, so that it lay in darkness.

Midnight had almost passed as a single hovering and glowing gleam in the air announced the appearance of the wolves. It had been agreed to let the wolves into the yard, and not to start firing until then.

In a short period of time, five or six wolves gathered around the hen-house. The agreed upon signal was given, and one shot rang out swiftly after another.

Florentina had spent the time near her husband. It seemed to her as if she heard a human cry in the midst of the shots and the howls of the wounded wolves. Frightened, she walked in the direction to where she knew her spouse to be. Michael stood leaning against the wall, one hand in front of the eyes.

“What’s wrong with you” she asked nervously.

“I don’t know,” he gave as an answer, “I thought a shot hit me as I stuck my head out of the window in order to be able to see better. But I felt no pain and think that the shot which went just by my face only blinded me a bit. Bring me into the room.”

Florentina led him in. She lit candles, but Michael still groped around as if he were in darkness. Alarmed, Florentina led him to bed, and made cold poultices for him.

The gentlemen came back. Almost all of them had killed a wolf; only one seemed to have gotten away. When they heard of the accident which had befallen the lord, they looked at one another, dumbfounded. Any one of them could have fired the unlucky shot, for they all had stood in the same direction. Any bullet could have struck his head. But the blame for the accident was attributable to Michael himself – it was only the consequence of his carelessness.

While the gentlemen were still standing together in consternation, Florentina entered, without paying attention to the sympathy which was expressed to her from all round; she stepped towards Brabinski, and curtly ordered him to ride to the city immediately and to send a doctor over to the manor without delay.

It was only a few moments later that the rittmeister leapt through the gate.¹¹²

Without bothering further about the guests, Florentina hurried back to her husband’s bedroom.

¹¹² It must be understood, that he did this on his horse.

It was almost day-time when the doctor came. After a cursory examination of the patient, he found it necessary to send for two colleagues out of Lemberg¹¹³ for consultation.

Florentina immediately had a telegramme sent to the capital city, in which she asked for the assistance of these professionals.

Neither day nor night did she depart from the bed of the patient. She had all visits declined through her house-maid, and only dedicated herself to the care of her husband. Brabinski came two or three times, but even for him, Florentina was not available. He became angry and swore, but always came again; and when one day he remained sitting in the salon and told the maid that he would not leave until he had spoken to Lady Tarnavka, Florentina, having been told of the intention of the rittmeister, actually did come into the salon.

He jumped up and wanted to embrace her lovingly, but she fended him off determinedly, and asked him what he wanted anyhow.

Brabinski looked at her in astonishment. "What I want from you, Florentina," he said, "you are looking at and speaking to. Have you forgotten how much I love you, that you could banish me so long from your presence? I thirst for a loving word from your lips."

"I ask you, for goodness sake," replied Florentina angrily, "to leave me alone with such things at this time; I have more serious things to do than chatter about your love with you. My husband is seriously ill, indeed it is even very probable that his eyesight will be lost forever; I have to dedicate myself fully to his care and I have neither the time nor the inclination to occupy myself with other things."

Brabinski looked at her fixedly. The announcement of the beautiful woman fell upon him like a cold shower. He had believed himself loved by her, and now he had to find out that he owned not the slightest bit of her heart, which was wholly and undividedly her husband's possession. This disappointment, so painful for his vanity, made him bitter, and he said to Florentina: "So you lied when you said you loved me?"

¹¹³ Now known as Lviv or Lvov, it was the capital of the Habsburg Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria when Sacher-Masoch wrote the story.

“I beg you, no sentimentality. At that time I was truly good to you; I had the time, and I was in the mood. Today, now that my husband has had a serious accident, things are different. It would be a cruel on my part if I wanted to leave him now and trust him to unknown hands in order to dally with, and caress someone else, while he lies here as helpless as a baby. I feel sorry for you, but Michael is closer to me; as long as he is suffering, I will belong only to him!”

And so it indeed was, the doctors explained, that Lord Tarnavka would never get his eyesight back.¹¹⁴

The poor man had to accommodate himself to his bad fortune, which Florentina faithfully helped him bear.

The frolicsome, merry woman was completely changed. She never left the side of her blind husband. With him, she drove in a small wagon which she herself steered, to supervise the seeding; leaning on her arm, he went into the farmyard and through the stalls, and when the threshing machine worked outside and the presence of the lord and lady were absolutely required, she had a small little house¹¹⁵ built for him, in which she seated him, and since this had to be separated from the working place in order to protect him from straw and dust, she walked maybe a hundred times during the day between the machine and the little house, to see if he was in want of anything.

In spite of the misfortune, she had not lost her cheerfulness, but now she only had it serve to keep sorrow and melancholy from the mind of the blind man.

In the long winter evenings, when he was wrapped up warmly, sitting by the fireplace and staring fixedly ahead with his lifeless eyes, she sang the most beautiful songs for him, and accompanied these herself on the piano, and almost always succeeded in cheering him up and in conjuring up a smile on his lips. When she came to him after an hour of this, and sat down beside his feet, then he groped for her head, drew in his breath deeply, and pressed a thankful kiss upon her blond crown of hair.

¹¹⁴ As literal as possible of a translation was given, but there may be a misprint in the book, with a lack of proper punctuation. A variant is: “And indeed things turned out that way. The doctors had explained that Lord Tarnavka would never get his eyesight back.” However, even this is not very satisfactory. The German word “*auch*” presents a problem, combined with “*so*”. [The original sentence reads: *Und so war es auch die Ärzte erklärten, daß Herr Tarnawka sein Augenlicht nie mehr zückerhalten werde.*] The first clause or sentence is disconnected from the probable antecedent, the prediction of losing the eyesight.

¹¹⁵ This redundancy is translated from the German, but can be found in English.

Only a few good old friends now visited the small manor, and those few honoured Florentina as an angel, while Lord Tarnavka became more cheerful again – he became used to his fate, and often repeated to his friends that he was now completely happy.

Maybe there stirred within him a vague awareness of how much the misfortune which had befallen him had brought about a noble sprouting in the development of the mind and character of his wife, and which now had led the once fickle woman to his heart.

January 18, 2022

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Implicit web references are of January 18, 2022.

Twice Given Away

Translator's Introduction

The original German title of the present rendition into English was “*Zweimal Verschenkt*”. The second word would be clumsily, but more accurately be translated by “given as a present”.

The “present” which is given away in the following story is that of a man in a Russia in the times when a serf was still the property of his master. The reader may well ask what the difference is between a serf and a slave. For the purposes of the present article, we might consider both of these to be the same: the definition given in *Wikipedia* of a serf does not concur with what might have happened in the story: a serf cannot be sold.¹¹⁶ In that sense, Sacher-Masoch may have made a historical error, but on the other hand, the predicament of the serf is so much like that of a slave, that curiosity about the one may tell us a lot about the other. It would be more useful, in the opinion of the present writer, to define the serf, at least the Russian one, as someone under the rule of a nobleman, who upon his death would leave him to his heirs; while the slave (as understood in U.S. history)

¹¹⁶ Serfdom”, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serfdom>, accessed December 30, 2021. Page 69 of *Die Damen im Pelz* (2nd section) has a baroness say of the serf in the tale, “... if he embarrasses you, sell him to me.”

is the property of a landowner, subject to be bought and sold. The reader will see if the treatment of the serf might be as bad as that of a serf – but the less said about the worst excesses of the two systems, the better for our composure. The important thing is that these should not exist now - in any of their variants, and that where they exist, they should be abolished.

This particular story does not so much show the vengeful woman described in Sacher-Masoch's "Foreword", but if the latter had intended to inveigh against marriage outside of one's class, it serves as a specific example.

The spelling of the name Prochor Pawlowitsch has been changed to Prokhor Pavlovitch. We may consider him to be a type of Icarus who wanted to fly too high, but was lucky enough to have a strong downward current push him into a favourable environment on firm ground.

Twice Given Away

It was during the time of the still-existing serfdom under the Czar Alexander I ¹¹⁷ that the no-longer young, though immensely rich Prince Aladoff ¹¹⁸ had returned from abroad to his main palace in Chomsin, ¹¹⁹ and began to occupy himself assiduously with the administration of his far-flung properties and the welfare of his peasants.

On a hot summer afternoon, after he had already galloped for several hours through his fields, he came to a small village entirely inhabited by his serfs. He and his horse yearned for a fresh drink of water, but the village seemed to have died out – its inhabitants were out in the fields, and he could hardly hope to find a soul who would bring him the desired refreshment.

As he stopped in the middle of the path and looked around helplessly, he heard a light voice fresh with youthfulness singing one of those melancholy Russian songs that

¹¹⁷ 1777 – 1825, "Alexander I of Russia", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_I_of_Russia : , accessed December 30, 2021.

¹¹⁸ The name is fictitious, as far as a web search seemed to suggest.

¹¹⁹ Written with "ss" in German, for the correct pronunciation in that language. No such place seems to have existed, the word as it is sounds Asiatic, and a web search suggests a relationship to Thailand, clearly not relevant to the story.

come from the heart of the people and bury themselves therein again. Carefully he dismounted, tied his horse firmly to the door of the hut out of which the singing seemed to come, and stepped quietly into the same. By the cradle of a child no more than a few weeks old, sat a boy of twelve or thirteen singing in this small, low-roofed room. The prince remained standing silently in the doorway until the song was over, and then stepped closer. Given a fright, the young singer sprang up – he had not seen the presence of the prince.

“What’s your name?” the latter asked.

“Prokhor Pavlovitch¹²⁰, little father,¹²¹” answered the fellow.

“Sing for me that song once more,” said the prince, “which you have just sung.”

“If you so command, little father, I will sing,” answered the lad, and he began to clear his throat with a frightful sound and then to spit, but remained as quiet as a mouse.

“Well, then,” asked the prince, “why aren’t you singing?”

“I cannot, little father, I truly cannot,” replied the lad, shyly looking toward the ground.

“C’mon, you sang very well previously,” said Aladoff kindly.

“It was only because I was so alone, little father, and then it just comes naturally to me,” Prokhor said.

“Well, then, I’ll go out. Perhaps in that case it will come back to you,” said the prince, as he went in front of the door and sat down on a small stone bench beside a large grey cat purring in its sleep.

¹²⁰ The name exists, but not in a way relevant to the story. One similar occurrence was found for Russians who had died in the Second World War, dying for their country (<https://de.pobediteli.ru/>), another was an accidental result which tied Prokhor of one column with the Pavlovitch in another, but approximately on the same line.

¹²¹ “Little father”, a term often used for the Czar, according to what this translator learned in Russian History at McMaster University, through a Dr. Turner, 1971 or 1972. According to the following reference, the translation from Russian is wrong (but in the present article it has been translated from the German!): E. M. Butler, *Rainer Maria Rilke*, [Cambridge: University Press, 1946], p. 78, viewed at books.google.com/books?id=ems3AAAAIAAJ&pg=PA78. As a partial view, it may not be visible in the future, in which case, try a web search for: Russian term “little father”, other suggestions, some not agreeing with the Butler book, but with the professor, will appear.

And so it was that Prokhor truly did sing the song again, and much better than the first time. Through the joy at discovering the small singer, the prince completely forgot his thirst.

His private chapel required new talent, so quickly he came to the firm decision to have the little one trained for this purpose.

“Present yourself tomorrow to Paul Timolnitch,” he said to the lad before he rode off.

Paul Timolnitch was the nobleman’s administrator, and as Prokhor Pavlovitch presented himself to the former on the next day, the [telega](#) already stood at the door in order to bring the lad to Moscow for the full training of his voice.

The small serf, for his part, had not the least idea what was intended to be done with him. With mute obedience he climbed into the wagon and gave a melancholy smile as he was driven through the village and thought of his parents, to whom he had not been able to say his good-byes.

Prokhor was in Moscow for five years, trained not only in the art of singing, but also in every other way, such that he was educated to be a man of the world.

His voice was the most beautiful in all of Moscow, and entitled his teachers to the highest expectations. After five years had passed, Prince Aladoff wrote his officials – who had informed the nobleman of Prokhor’s progress – that the young man was to be provided with the necessary financial means and be sent to Italy for three years in order to have his voice given the last improvements by the outstanding schools there.

These three years also added to the moulding of Prokhor’s heart and mind. No news came to him out of his country, neither from his relatives nor from the prince; and under the blue skies of Italy, he almost forgot that he was both a peasant and a serf.

Then came a letter calling the young man back home came from Paul Timolnitch. The old prince had abruptly died, and his only daughter, the widowed Princess Olivia Alexandrovna Bragin, believed that enough had happened for the improvement of the singer, and that it was time that he showed what he had learned.

So Prokhor did return home. No one knew him and likewise everything seemed foreign to him. His parents had died, and the hut in which he had lived was now occupied

by peasants unknown to him. He felt sad and lonely in his country, and would have preferred to have turned his back on it.

As he stepped into Paul Timolnitch's place, the administrator stood up respectfully, threw his cap under the table, and quickly hid his pipe under the long sleeves of his canvass-type garb.

"Paul Timolnitch," said Prokhor, "it seems that you do not recognize me. I am Prokhor Pavlovitch, the singer."

"Well, I'll be ...!" cried out the administrator, sticking the pipe into his mouth again. "You look like a gracious gentleman. What am I going to do with you? Go to Olivia Alexandrovna – she will examine your vocal talents and indicate your place in the chapel choir."

Prokhor headed towards the palace. A French chambermaid greeted him with a graceful bow and announced him to her lady.

Olivia Alexandrovna had brought three little white dogs out of Paris and was just amusing herself by inciting them upon one another by holding a piece of sugar in tongs, first in front of the muzzle of one and then another, without ever giving it to any of them. It was at this moment that Madame Fanchette, her chambermaid, stepped in to announce Prokhor.

Olivia was so occupied in teasing her little dogs that she failed to hear the announcement, and Fanchette thought it correct to allow entrance to the young man who appeared to be so *comme il faut*.¹²² Just now did the princess look up, and as she noticed Prokhor remaining standing modestly in the doorway, she stood up and took a few steps towards him and spoke French to him, on the assumption that she saw a man of her own social circles. He answered her fluently and surely in the same language, just as if had been his mother tongue.

"My name is Prokhor Pavlovitch," he said.

Olivia looked at him in astonishment – this was not a name with a distinguished sound – it was impossible that a man out of a good family be so called. "What brings you to me?" she enquired, still kindly.

¹²² In French in the original text.

Prokhor reddened, as he saw that he had been misjudged. As a consequence of his excellent education, he had, in external appearances, the form of a gentleman, and now he would have to explain to this beautiful, fine, distinguished lady that he was in fact a peasant and her slave.

“Yesterday I returned from Italy,” said he, suppressing his feelings, “whither your father, Madame, had sent me, for the final touches in the education of my voice.”

Olivia now felt that she had made a *faux pas*,¹²³ but with the finesse of a woman of the world she agilely compensated for her mistake.

“Oh, yes – the singer, upon whom our private chapel has such great hopes,” she said patronizingly, “I am truly curious to hear you.” With that, she indicated the piano which stood in the room.

Prokhor understood the gesture which had immediately shown him his station, and although he was not in the mood to sing, he quickly overcame his embarrassment, sat down at the instrument, and in a wonderful voice sang the Italian song, *Sancta Lucia*.¹²⁴

Olivia had heard the most famous singers in the world, and neither expected anything new nor exceptional of Prokhor’s singing. She only had asked him to sing in order to bring an end to her embarrassment. Barely had he turned his back, and her face took on its usual world-weary look. Tired out, she reclined in a sofa and closed her eyes. When she had opened them again, the song had ended and Prokhor had become someone different for her. The spoilt woman had never heard such a voice as this neither in Paris nor in London, both so powerful and so youthfully fresh, but at the same time as soft and sweet as this one. A pleasant thrill had already overcome her. At this moment, Prokhor was neither a man of the world nor a peasant, she saw only “culture” in him, and artists, in her eyes, were something exceptional. One could go around with them without any commitment to them, and once one had tired of them, they could be let go.

Olivia was bored to death out in the country, and indeed she was bored everywhere. She was blasé and jaded by everything that still interested other women. Rich, young, beautiful, and free, the whole world stood with its pleasures at her disposal, but she had enjoyed everything while not being satisfied with anything.

¹²³ In French in the original text, literally, a false step, that is, a mistake.

¹²⁴ “*Sancta*”, Latin, for the correct Italian, “*Santa*”, is written in the original text, as if it were the Italian.

She hoped to amuse herself with Prokhor. A peasant who looked like a gentleman and who was capable of singing like a great artist – that was something new for her. With flattering words she invited him to sit next to her. Modestly, but still with a certain aplomb, he accepted her invitation; and now they spoke Russian with one another.

Prokhor had never seen a woman who was both as beautiful and elegant as Olivia. Of course he had seen beautiful women in Italy, but certainly they were not as graceful and charming as this one; above all, they were incapable of chatting as pleasantly as Olivia. No distinguished Parisian lady could have held a candle to her. When she wanted to please, then please she surely did, and Prokhor in turn wanted to please her – so she had achieved her goal in ten minutes.

They spoke about Italy, and although she had indifferently overlooked the artistic treasures of this wonderful country on her journey there, she feigned that it was with pleasure that she heard the enthusiastic words of the young man.

Even while they were chatting, Olivia had Paul Timolnitch called to her, and ordered him to have the garden pavilion prepared as the living quarters for Prokhor.

“What?” said he, “am I commanded by Olivia Alexandrovna?” – “To prepare the garden pavilion for Prokhor Pavlovitch,” repeated the princess, with a tone of voice which did not allow for misinterpretation.

And now Paul Timolnitch understood completely. He gave a deep bow to his mistress before he left, and almost equally profoundly he bowed to the singer.

When Prokhor came to the indicated living quarters, he was received by a French servant who awaited orders. The poor young man stood there, in the middle of chambers appointed in the richest Parisian luxury, and had no idea what had happened to him. He sat at the table of the princess, and when he sat next to her in her carriage, and her garb touched his knee, a shudder ran through him, and when she extended her hand to him in departure and questioningly looked at him with her green eyes, he hardly dared to touch the tips of her fingers. He then rushed down the steps with a feverish forehead into the garden, and looked for a reason for the condescending behaviour of the lady and for the anguish with which his heart was bound when in her presence.

Once when Olivia came into his quarters, throwing off her sable fur so that her long, red tresses fell over the bedazzling white shoulders; and she, with a heaving bosom bent

down over the fantasizing singer seated by the piano, and her hot breath wafted across his cheeks, he suddenly was aware of what was going on with him, as well as with her. He let the nervous hands slide down from the piano keys, and for the first time, looked into her eyes without shyness. She reciprocated the look, and with a laugh rejoiced at her success.

Olivia Alexandrovna no longer was bored. It no longer occurred to her to tease her dogs, nor to box the ears of her chambermaids. She became cheerful and happy, and discovered that even life in the country could have its charms. She had always heard talk of genuine, true love, but had never had the opportunity to see it close at hand, but now she recognized it, not within her, but by Prokhor. She had been paid homage to by many, but she had certainly not loved anybody. She herself, of course, was accustomed to merely play with feelings, but Prokhor was so serious about the matter that it greatly amused her.

Thus a year or more passed. Prokhor Pavlovitch lived like a prince. The princess had surrounded him with splendour and luxury, and with surprising speed he found himself enjoying the good life. The officials and the servants of the house handled him as deferentially as they did their lord, and soon he felt like one of them.¹²⁵

Now Olivia began to be bored again. To amuse herself, she invited the neighbours over. But of all of these, only one was in condition to entertain her: Count Sergius Alexandrovitch Panin. He had lost his tremendous wealth at gambling in Baden-Baden and Wiesbaden, and now only had a small estate bordering upon that of the princess – its income was too small to allow him to go abroad.¹²⁶ He was still a handsome man, and he hoped, through a convenient marriage, to get above water again. It was thus that Olivia's invitation was very convenient for him. The beautiful widow worth millions would have been a nice catch for him.

But she was at least as sly as Count Panin, and did not allow herself to be caught in his web. It entertained her immensely to see how Prokhor became envious of him, and how the count, whose experienced eyes soon had guessed Prokhor's position in the house, angrily gnashed his teeth.

One morning the princess had gotten up earlier than usually, and had gone into the park where she found a melancholy Prokhor under some alder-trees by the side of a brook

¹²⁵ The word "lord", not "lady" is found in the text, although this is not the expected word.

¹²⁶ Gambling seems to have been a vice among the rich, for example, as depicted in Dostoyevsky's *The Gambler*. Baden-Baden and Wiesbaden are German cities, their casinos still exist.

which ran through there; with his eyes he was following the leaves which fell, autumn-announcing, into the waters and bobbed among the waves.

“What’s wrong with you?” asked Olivia, who suddenly stood before the man who loved her. “You look so unhappy.”

“And that I am”, replied the singer.

“Oh”, cried out the beautiful woman in mockery, “you demand a lot from life.”

“You are quite right,” responded Prokhor, “because everything seems vain and worthless to me, as long as you are not mine.”

“Am I not yours?”

“Not in the manner my heart desires.”

“Then what else is it that I should do?”

“Become my wife.”

The princess looked at him fixedly for a moment, and then she began to laugh out loud. “Are you mad? How could I give you my hand, and even if I could, I would never do it. I want to remain free. The way in which I have you is much more enjoyable and comfortable.”

Panin came for dinner. The rivals eyed each other with angry looks, which pleased Olivia immensely and at the same time, increased her good appetite. Just to amuse herself, she sent Prokhor away while she retired to her boudoir for a siesta. There she stayed alone with Panin, whom she kept at bay in the manner of an animal-tamer.¹²⁷

In the evening, when the count had left her, she had Prokhor called to her. Pale he came, with his eyes expressing anger, and while he breathed laboriously, he sat down at the piano, and began to play.

“What’s with you?” Olivia called out, “why don’t you come to me.”

“I thought you only needed me to play and sing.”

“Is that supposed to be funny?”

¹²⁷ Such is the name of the first story, “The Animal-Tamer”, in the first section of *Die Damen im Pelz*.

“It is common to be silly,” replied Prokhor, “when one is in love, and I love you madly, but see that for you I am only a plaything.”

“But you know the saying, Prokhor: A man of spirit can be in love like a fool, but never like an idiot.”¹²⁸

“I know it, but you want to make me furious,” he said loud and clear, getting up, “so do not be surprised if finally I am in that state.”

“Oh, how that amuses me,” said the princess, smiling, “but give me my fur coat, it is cool – I am shivering. It is there on the chair.”

Prokhor obeyed and the princess slipped her arms comfortably into the sleeves of the creation of fur. “And so,” she said, “let’s continue talking. You’re jealous, right?”

“Yes, Olivia.”

“This Panin is indeed a dangerous person.”

“I ask you – if you do not love me – then pity me,” answered Prokhor; he embraced the beautiful woman in the full ermine-lined red velvet jacket now, in his fever-like trembling saw her even more sumptuous and charming with his glances.

“And if I want to torment you, if that should give me pleasure?”

“Olivia,” he shouted out, and grabbed her wildly by her arm, “you will be my wife or I will kill myself.”

“Still your blood, I ask you,” said the princess, without losing her composure for even a moment.

“Forgive me!”

“So you ask for my hand,” she continued, “well, we can speak reasonably about that. Of course, you have received a letter of manumission from my father?” The question was tossed out nonchalantly, but in Olivia’s eyes something sinister lurked, which could have frightened someone, but Prokhor was blind.

¹²⁸ This may not have been a saying, but it was previously written in a tale in an Austrian book: *“Ein Konzert bei die Baronin Fanny Arnstein” in Wien vor sechzig Jahren, oder Kaiser Franz und seiner Gäste, Historische Volksroman, I. Band*, [Wien: R. v. Waldheim, 1874], p. 224, seen at books.google.com/books?id=pJFyjhpGiQwC&pg=PA224, accessed December 31, 2021.

“No,” he answered without worry, “I have received no letter of manumission.”

“Well, then, you see,” replied Olivia, “I cannot very well marry my own serf.” Immediately she tugged on the cord of a bell. A chambermaid appeared, and as she quietly had received the instructions for an errand from her mistress, she quietly took her leave again.

“It just depends on you, to give me a letter of manumission,” said Prokhor, after he had been silent and looking absent-mindedly in front of himself for some time.

“I know.”

“As soon as you want to – “

“But if I do not want to?”

“I will force you.”¹²⁹

“You – me?” The princess looked at him quietly, while a malicious smile gathered around her lips.

Prokhor did not perceive that at that very moment the curtain concealing the door to the salon behind it moved, but she noticed it, and got up at the same time. “You want to dictate to me, what I should do?” she continued, “You, my – slave!”

“Olivia!”

“Are you not my slave?” the princess asked, with horrible mockery, “with whom I can do whatever I fancy? But yes, you have forgotten, and so you must be reminded thereof again.” She clapped her hands, and immediately four of her people entered the room and seized Prokhor. He became as one petrified. No sound came out of his lips.

“What are you now?” asked Olivia.

An answer remained due on Prokhor’s part.

“Do, as I have commanded!” continued Olivia.

¹²⁹ We have, now, two elements from Goethe’s *“Der Erlkonig”*, the alder-tree, mentioned earlier above, and the idea of forcing an unwilling person, as described here: <https://paulkarlmoeller.wordpress.com/the-erlkonig/>.

Prokhor was led away, his hair and beard shaved off, dressed in the livery of a lackey, and then presented again to his lady.

“Now, then, what are you now?” she asked once again. Since Prokhor remained quiet, she gave her people a gesture, and before the unfortunate man knew what was happening, they had bound his hands behind his back, and the princess had grabbed her dog whip.

“No, please, mercy,” shouted Prokhor, and fell onto his knees in front of her.

“For the third time I ask you, what are you?”

“Your slave.”

“You are that,” said Olivia, feeling hot because of the excitement, and beautified,¹³⁰ “and you shall remain so. As of now, you shall serve me, and woe to you if you are negligent, inept, and above all, if you forget your place for a single moment.”

* * *

For a while, Prokhor provided amusement to Olivia in his new role, but it did not take long for her to become bored even by this. She was entirely weary of him, and more than once asked herself, what it was that she should do with him.

Then her aunt Ada Petrovna Baroness Cherkasseff came to visit her.

The rich woman of over forty, given to party-life, immediately discovered the good-looking lackey of fine aspect and directed Olivia’s attention towards him.

The latter laughed, and *sans façon*¹³¹ described the entire adventure with the singer.

“But that’s very easy,” Ada Petrovna said, as the former had finished her tale, “if he embarrasses you, sell him to me.”

“I have the principle never to sell anything,” replied the princess.

During the same afternoon, Ada Petrovna was delighted by a horse owned by her niece. “I have to have it at whatever price.”

¹³⁰ Translation of the word in text, which this writer believes to be in error: *verschonen* should possibly be in place of *verschönern*, the former implies that she remained unaffected.

¹³¹ In French in the original – unceremoniously.

“I have told you that I sell nothing,” replied Olivia.

“*Bon*,¹³² then give it to me as a present.

“You know what,” the princess quickly countered, “I would prefer to give you Prokhor.”

* * *

A year later, Czar Alexander came by chance during a tour of southern Russia to the palace of Ada Petrovna to quarter himself there. As there was no other entertainment to be had, the serfs of the baroness presented a genuine Russian folk-play in her palace theatre, which included singing. Prokhor had the main role, and Alexander showed himself to be so enthused by his voice, that Ada Petrovna, likewise weary of him, gave him as a gift to the monarch. For this, she received the title of a countess. Prokhor, given his freedom by the Czar, was sent by him to Petersburg¹³³ and as the years passed, became the most famous Russian singer and shone most excellently in Glinka’s opera, *A Life for the Czar*.

The beautiful, courteous women of the northern residence¹³⁴ stormed him with proposals of love, but he refused these with a painful smile, and since that time has remained estranged towards women.

December 31, 2021.

Translation © 2012, Paul Karl Moeller

The Alchemist

Translator’s Introduction

The German title here is *Der Goldmacher*, and this is another of the few stories where there is some deviation from the “Foreword” of *Those Ladies in Pelts*. In an unusual turn of events for the book under discussion, the “heroine” is kept from danger, the victim

¹³² In French in the original: well, then.

¹³³ Now, and originally, *Sankt Petersburg*, or Saint Petersburg in English, and also called Leningrad during Soviet times.

¹³⁴ Refers to the Saint Petersburg residence of the czar.

of crime is conceded justice, and the delinquent is given a punishment not in line with that of the “golden handshake” conceded to less-than-excellent company directors.

Whether the final reflects the practice of the time is unknown.

The alchemist and duke named in the story are based on real characters, and the reader is referred to an English or German version of the *Wikipedia* write-up.¹³⁵ The woman in the story may not have existed, as no results with her name turn up in our search engine, furthermore, the behaviour of the duke as suggested in the tale perhaps does not square with his reputation as “the Pious”.¹³⁶

The events of the fictional relation begin in the year prior to the death of the alchemist.

The portrayal of Italians may be offensive to some. This translator would agree with anyone who suggests that a stereotype is portrayed in the following article.

The Alchemist

It was in the year 1590 when an Italian by the name of Marco Bragadino settled in Munich as a medical doctor, and it was not long before much was said about him. In the first place, there were his uncommon masculine good looks which stirred up excitement; and then there was the strange and mysterious remedy which he used on his patients. These consisted mostly of women, and day by day, their number increased. Soon it was rumoured that he possessed magic potions through the help of which he succeeded in imparting everlasting youth and beauty.

Felicitas von Bäringen, the beloved of Duke William V of Bavaria, was now at the peak of her beauty, that is to say, she had arrived at that point where a woman may be attractive today, but tomorrow she might display the first signs of aging creeping into her life. She had heard of the Italian doctor, but she smiled – she did not yet require his arts.

¹³⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marco_Bragadino , German: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marco_Bragadino , French: https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marco_Bragadino - no other languages are available at the time of this writing.

¹³⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_V,_Duke_of_Bavaria

One evening she sat with the duke at a richly-appointed table. She loved those almonds with an easily-broken shell,¹³⁷ and she used to bite them open in order to give her beautiful teeth a chance to sparkle. She did the same thing today – with her rosy fingers she retrieved one almond after another from the dessert dish – when suddenly she threw the bitten almond back to the dish in horror, together with a pretty white tooth which she had broken. She had sufficient presence of mind to hide her misfortune from the duke, and claimed that she had bitten her tongue.

She now longer smiled that evening, and when William had left, she stepped anxiously in front of her mirror to ascertain the extent of the disfigurement occasioned by her loss.

The gap was not a large one, and quite towards the side, so by smiling she merely had to avoid opening her mouth too much, and thus there was nothing to be seen at all. Now calmed down, she went to bed.

After a few weeks, she believed that she perceived that the upper lip had sunken inwards somewhat, and that a wrinkle had formed in the corner of her mouth. With horror, she evaluated the consequences of this misfortune. She already imagined herself abandoned by the duke, which did not bother her heart that much, but painfully affected her greed for money, as William left immense amounts in her hands.

Her first thought was to find the Italian, and to accept his help.

One evening, as she did not expect the duke, she cloaked herself in a dark, heavy fur coat; and in order not to be recognized, she wrapped a densely-woven veil around her head, and accompanied by a trusty servant, sought the house in which Marco Bragadino was supposed to live.

After much wandering around she found it, but had to ring the bell repeatedly before she gained admittance. An Italian servant finally opened up and led her through dark aisles and upstairs into a room well to the back of the building; and that room, where the servant bade her to wait, was only frugally lit. She waited in vain for almost an hour, and during that time she constantly heard comings and goings. Clearly these were patients who had

¹³⁷ *Knackmandeln* (plural) in German, Latin designation: *P. dulcis* var. *fragilis*, *P. dulcis* alone is the almond in general, *fragilis* refers to that easily-broken shell, but no English translation has been found at the time of this writing.

been dealt with before her turn. In order to make the time pass faster, she looked around the room in which she found herself. It was arched, with walls decorated with pictures representing scenes taken from mythology, but these scenes were selected in such a way that they could not help but have an intoxicating effect upon the viewer. Small alabaster statues representing Venus and Apollo decorated a small cabinet; Felicitas was still fixated upon these charming figures when she heard breathing at her side. Turning around, she saw a man of surprisingly good looks standing next to her. As accustomed as Felicitas was to being in the company of men, she nevertheless remained speechless for a moment as a result of her surprise, and stared open-mouthed at the handsome human being.

“How can I be of service to you, Signora?” asked Marco Bragadino, for it was he – with that sweet, ingratiating tone of voice peculiar to Italians.

Felicitas, now once again composed, replied that above all she wished to be alone with him; this was said with a glance at her servant.

He led her into a small, lavishly-decorated chamber, and as he became aware that he was dealing with a distinguished lady, he carefully closed the doors and sat unassumingly on a chair, while he offered her to sit on a small, Turkish divan.

The duke’s beloved could not immediately decide if she could trust the handsome doctor with her misfortune; and it was not until the Italian courteously assured her that a woman of such exceptional beauty could hardly be ill, that she decided to share her secret with him. He gave a superior smile and promised to remedy the problem the next time she came to him.

Felicitas stayed with the doctor for a longer time than was necessary. When she finally left, he accompanied her to the door; and in farewell he kissed her small, white hand, which for a moment lay in his own.

As she left the doctor the second time, in the place of the missing tooth she had a false one made of nice, white wax, hardly distinguishable from the original.¹³⁸

Felicitas was happy was the successful work, and her thankfulness went so far that she agreed to visit the doctor every night that the duke was absent.

¹³⁸ A note in *New Scientist* (website) dated 19 September 2012 refers to a wax cap placed over a broken tooth more than 6000 years ago. Link is not provided due to possible violation of terms and conditions by so doing.

One time, Felicitas spoke to the doctor about his skills, and related that people believed that he had some potion through which one remained young and beautiful. The sly Italian, who already was aware of her station and her avarice, assured her that the assumption was a correct one, and that he was not only able to prepare that beauty product, but even to make gold – a task more difficult yet.

Felicitas' eyes sparkled at these words. Duke William had not been as free-giving as in the past towards her. His loyal subjects¹³⁹ had repeatedly brought to his awareness that they well knew what great amounts of money remained in the hands of his beloved, and let their indignation over this be expressed. Although he still languished for and remained bound to the enchanting lady, he was not blind enough to be unable to see that her heart did not go out to him so much for the man as for his money, and as a consequence, he became more parsimonious towards her.

The Italian's admission was a sweet revelation for Felicitas. To make gold! That, in her eyes, was a truly adorable art,¹⁴⁰ and almost reproachfully she asked the handsome Italian why he had let such a long time pass without practicing it.

Marco Bragadino then explained to her, that in the first place, a lot of money was required to make gold, and that he did not have the required sums therefor, and so he still had to wait.

Felicitas closed a formal agreement with him. In exchange for obtaining the required money from the duke, he had to promise that he would only deliver half of the gold that he made to the duke, and that he would share the other half with her.¹⁴¹ The Italian consented immediately, and Felicitas, who already saw herself wallowing in money, excitedly offered her beautiful lips to him in repayment for the promise.

The experienced woman had no difficulty in convincing her princely beloved to release the money required by Bragadino. What her sweetness could not acquire was accomplished through the tempting perspective of a golden harvest which she described to the duke, and which led him to hope for the replacement of the riches which he had

¹³⁹ The translator would have expected the word "servants" here, but we leave this as it is, to show the often illogical choice of words of the original, which also tend to slightly illogical sequences of events.

¹⁴⁰ *anbetungswürdige Kunst*

¹⁴¹ Notice the *non sequitur* here – nothing had been said about making gold for the duke (although that is part of the true story).

lavished upon her. Everybody believed in the art of changing lead into gold at that time,¹⁴² and the duke, highly pleased to find such a craftsman in his kingdom, determined to put everything at the disposal of the latter, to keep him put at any price.

Above all, Bragadino had to give up his medical practice, and dedicate himself full-time to alchemy. To this end the duke prepared for him a small, exclusive palace, provided with the necessary servants. Now the Italian lived like a prince, new sums of money constantly flowed to him, since he had alleged that the preparatory work required considerable expenditure. He knew how to awaken a true passion for gold in the prince, such that in his blindness no disbursement was too much for him. Bragadino could ask for whatever he wanted.

Felicitas no longer found it necessary to be received by her friend in secret; the duke himself saw him mostly only with her, and both – thrilled – listened to his golden promises. Since William provided the alchemist so richly with money, the latter showered the beloved of the former with presents. He had the most beautiful articles of jewellery – true works of art – come out of his Venice, to decorate the classical breasts and arms of this woman.

The good looks and liberality of the Italian had entangled the heart of the calculating woman to such a degree that it was with difficulty that she concealed the effect from the duke.

Half a year had gone by, and still the alchemist was not able to show any results. At first Felicitas became impatient, and finally the same was true of the duke. As dear as the Italian was to her, Felicitas yearned so much for the promised gold, that it came to pass that she urged the duke to energetically insist that there the alchemist's craft reveal some concrete result.

This request was quite opportune for the duke. He hurried to insist upon a deadline for the alchemist, at which the former absolutely had to be shown a successful outcome. Bragadino accepted the deadline, and promised to have the duke satisfied by that time.

¹⁴² Translation substituted for "*Goldmacherkunst*", or, "the art of alchemy", as more descriptive.

But shortly before that fixed date, Bragadino went to Felicitas and requested that she flee with him. Astonished, she asked him what would have led him to take such a step, and he confessed that he had lied to and swindled the duke.

“What,” she cried out indignantly, “you do not know how to make gold?”

The Italian laughed slyly. “Truly I understand how to make gold,” said he, “but not in the sense that the duke understands. Have I not for both you and I made gold in abundance? Do you want to share in what was accomplished?”

Felicitas became pale as a result of her anger at the swindle that had been perpetrated, but she controlled herself admirably, accepted the suggestion, and merely bade him to wait two days in order that the preparations for the flight could be made.

He accepted, and she mustered all her sweetness, so that he would not notice the indignation which was seething inside of her.

He had hardly left, when she sent a messenger to the duke to request that he meet her. When he came, she betrayed everything to him. His anger knew no bounds. He immediately had the Italian arrested, and before an hour was up, he – the Italian – languished in a dungeon.

But just now Felicitas grew frightened at what she had done. Could not the betrayed friend denounce her in turn?

At this point, she did everything that she could to mollify the duke; but it was too late – he was ashamed of his gullibility – he wanted to see the swindler punished at any price, and ordered his judges to have the delinquent feel the full weight of the law.

With trembling it was that Felicitas watched the course of the proceedings. At first, Bragadino lied about the purpose of the fraud, and insisted that he really did know how to make gold. However, when he was subjected to the rack, he confessed everything.

Now he was sentenced to death. When he saw that all was lost, he also let the judges know about how he stood with relation to Felicitas.

One of the court servants hurried to the rich woman beloved of the duke on the assumption that he would be well-rewarded for bringing her the news of the confession of

the condemned man. Before the duke could bring her to account, Felicitas had fled to France with her accumulated treasures.

The upcoming execution of the handsome alchemist exercised the same effect among the population of Munich as an exciting play. Hours before the designated time the streets and plazas where the delinquent had to pass were crammed with people. As the procession came by, a murmur of surprise went through the crowd.

Marco Bragadino, surrounded by soldiers, and accompanied by a cleric, was horribly pale, but still of good appearance. His tall figure was covered with a robe bedecked with tinsel. Upon his long, black locks was a cap of golden paper, while golden shackles bound his hands.

At the place of the execution, gilded gallows awaited him, and even the rope which was meant to terminate his life was similarly treated.¹⁴³

Justice, as applied in those years, enjoyed tempering the severity of the law with humour.¹⁴⁴

December 29, 2021

Translation © 2012, Paul Karl Moeller

The Wild Huntress

Translator's Introduction

After the relatively tame preceding two stories, we now come to “*Die Wilde Jägerin*”, which is literally translated in our English title. Perhaps the reader has been exposed to similar tales, either in print¹⁴⁵ or video¹⁴⁶. Criminals commit plebian varieties of the cruelty found here.

¹⁴³ In the end, the use of the rope was not allowed. For more details, go to the first note of this story,

¹⁴⁴ The truth of this statement could not be determined. In all probability, it is fiction, based on a gruesome relation of an event which was to take place in 1600, which will not be advertised here.

¹⁴⁵ One example of sufficient fame is the 1952 book, *The Sound of His Horn*.

¹⁴⁶ *The Running Man*, *The Dangerous Game*, and *The Hunger Games* are three movies based on a similar premise. There is no pretence of intellectual content, at least in the movies.

The spelling of the following names has been modified: Wlasta has been changed to Vlasta. Zefim has been changed to Tsefim.

The Wild Huntress

After the Thirty-Years War,¹⁴⁷ a roughness and degradation of morals reigned in Bohemia which was nothing short of unbelievable. The rich and powerful did as they pleased, without having to fear being held to account to anyone. Law and order were unknown concepts; one reign of violence followed another, and the common people avenged themselves upon insolent offenders through robbery, murder and arson. All bonds of discipline had been severed, from the highest nobility down to every last peasant.

It was natural that under such conditions, even the character of women would become unpolished. Almost always, they were found to take an active part in the activities of the men.

Among those who were most feared and hated because of their cruelty, Countess Tsefim took first place. She was a thirty-year-old of uncommon beauty. Her husband was a colonel of a cavalry regiment, and she was with him in the war, endured all its hardships; and when this colonel, a count, became lame through a gunshot and was forced to spend the rest of his life in an armchair, this woman, inured to the harsh military life, could no longer adapt herself to quiet domesticity. She had a magnificent palace on the border of Kumau County;¹⁴⁸ it was there that she went with her husband, and while he dreamt away within the four walls of his room, she stormed upon a wild courser through fields and forests; or shot the game found there, which had increased innumerable during the long years of her absence, with an experienced and sure hand. Often she even rode out at night in order to ambush poachers or thieves of the forest's wood; and woe to the poor devil who fell into her hands! With cruel pleasure she let the wretch be chased ahead of her for hours, and when the unfortunate being collapsed, half-mangled by the wild beasts, she then, with relish, finally thrust her long hunting knife into his breast.

She also used to arrange big hunting parties and invite the neighbouring cavaliers to them. This was the opportunity for Vlasta to show her great skill and dash in the presence of a circle of admiring onlookers. None of the gentlemen could hold a candle to her in cleverness and bravery when following a deer; the consequences were that all of them adored her and courted her favour,

¹⁴⁷ A European war from 1618 to 1648, often attributed to religious factors, but now also seen as a battle for control by the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs and the French Bourbon royal houses.

¹⁴⁸ Perhaps, a name derived from the Polish village of Kumów Majoracki. No results were obtained for European places named Kumau. [German "au" is English "ow".]

but the wild horsewoman was neither courteous nor full of feeling. The tender movements of love or similar passionate emotions were completely foreign to her heart, and a cooing suitor was as laughable as despicable. Nevertheless, she was very vain and proud of her beauty, and once, when an ardent admirer, in order to avenge himself for her coldness, told her that on the other side of the forest he had seen a smith's wife who was much more beautiful than she, she blazed in anger and immediately decided to destroy her rival.

The next morning she stood in front of the smith's cottage, which, to her great regret, was not on her landed property. She knocked on the door forcefully, and as both of the spouses came to it in alarm, the proud countess had to confess that this peasant woman truly was much more beautiful than she. She barely managed to suppress her anger enough in order to be able to request a glass of water of them both, in order to justify her knocking. But when the smith's wife brought it to her, her anger came to the fore: she hurled the entire contents of the hostess's glass into her face, and as the latter jumped back in shock, the countess spurred her horse and galloped off wildly.

Now she reflected day and night how she would get at that woman in order to destroy her. Had she been one of her subjects, she would simply have had her murdered; however, as the hut lay beyond her property, she had no absolute right over that couple. Finally, she came up with a plan and went forward quickly to have it carried out. The man, as all poor people of that time, had to be a poacher, so all that had to be done was to catch him on her grounds; and once she had him, his wife couldn't escape her anymore. Therefore she had her peasants come; and promised that he who would deliver the smith would get a significant reward, by assuring them that he was the biggest and most dangerous poacher, and the cause of the most damage to her woodlands. Vlasta's servants, not much better than all the other thieving rabble, spurred on by the promised reward, actually delivered the smith bound hand and foot within a few days.

When the smith's wife heard of the capture of her husband, she came to the palace, pale and nervous, throwing herself at Vlasta's feet while pleading for his life. Vlasta dedicated herself for a while with cruel pleasure at the mortal fear of the despairing woman; only after that did she begin to deal with her.

"What will you offer me, if I give you the life of your husband," she warily asked.

"What can I give you, my lady?" said the woman sadly, letting her head sink despondently, "I am poor; you know that, of course."

“Offer your beauty, and I will give your husband his life.”

The young woman looked at her in amazement. “How can I do that?” she asked.

“Say that you agree to it,” replied Vlasta impatiently while reaching for a bottle which stood in front of her on a table, and even before the unfortunate woman had time to answer; she had, with lightning speed, splashed the liquid of the small container into the beautiful face.¹⁴⁹

With a loud cry of pain the woman collapsed while Vlasta stood in front of her; and with malicious curiosity watched the horrible disfigurement of the countenance that had only moments earlier been so beautiful – disfigurement that she had caused with the corrosive material of the bottle. Not until the heartless woman was convinced that the beauty of her rival had been destroyed permanently, did she release her – although without sending along the captured husband.

The latter was still to provide Vlasta with much amusement. She had only promised his wife not to kill him, and she did not do that; but she wanted to have her fun with him at his expense. She wrote to her hunting friends that she would have a hunt with hounds on a certain day, and invited them to participate. Once the guests were assembled, Vlasta appeared amongst them on horseback, dressed in a red satin riding habit lined with marten-skin – and ordered the wretch, such as was the custom in those days, to be put in chains on a large, robust stag; then she let the gates of the palace be opened and the stag beaten heavily, so that it then fled through the gate with break-neck speed. When the animal had achieved a small lead, she ordered the release of the pack of dogs, and with loud howls they rushed after the stag; then Vlasta gave her company the sign to start off, and thus began this particular kind of hunt.

Among the hunters there was also Vlasta’s disdained suitor – the one who had told her that the smith’s wife was more beautiful than she; and Vlasta had arranged things in such a way that the hounded stag would be pressed into the direction in which the hut of the poor woman lay. Before they even got there, she called her admirer to her, and said mockingly, “Isn’t it hereabouts that the famous beauty lives, of whom you told me about?”

The nobleman, overjoyed at having the opportunity to prepare a humiliation for the proud woman, immediately hurried to show her the way to the smith’s hut. Vlasta gave the

¹⁴⁹ Any confusion about “she”, from a grammatical point of view, is the result of an equally confusing German sentence.

order to hound the stag in that direction; she herself hurried to reach that place together with her admirer at the same time as the stag in order to gloat over the surprise of her admirer. Both spurred their horses on, and wildly galloping, drove one another ahead of the pack, so that they halted at the little house a few seconds earlier before the arrival of the hounded stag, which was locked into a narrow circle by the beaters and the dogs doing the chasing.

On account of the noise and shouting that the arrivals caused, the smith's wife came out of the door. Vlasta watched with curiosity the face of her ardent admirer: he did not recognize the once so beautiful woman, and thus asked her if she would call the smith's wife.

At this moment, the stag, with the bleeding body of the unlucky man on his back, arrived in front of the hut.

With a piercing cry the tormented woman rushed to the half-dead spouse, and as she lifted his head to her breast and held it fast there, she uttered a shockingly cruel curse against the cause of this outrage; and as strong as Vlasta's nerves were, yet even her lips paled upon hearing it. Hastily she turned her horse and rushed off.

Not until now did Vlasta's admirer understand what had taken place there, and he explained the probable connection between the events to the others who were present; and even if they felt no sympathy, they were surprised by the way that woman so vain about her beauty had managed to render her rival harmless.

The group did not follow Vlasta – she arrived at her palace alone. In anger that her “fun” had not been a success, she beat a stable boy – who had appeared to lead away her steamed-up horse – so hard that the studs of her riding whip immediately caused him to fall dead from the blows to his temples.

Since that time Vlasta lived almost exclusively on her horse and in the forests; day and night she spent her time outside, only once or twice during the night did she go home in order to rest for an hour or two and to change her clothes. The folks around only called her the “wild huntress” and avoided her nervously, if she was seen in time.

Several years had passed since then, when one day in the middle of a field Vlasta was surprised by a terrible thundering. Yet, as much as she and her horse were used to bad weather, this time she had to think about finding shelter from the thunderclaps and the

frightening flashes of lightning; but before she could find a safe place to flee to, a glowing lightning bolt descended from the black sky, followed by a concussion of thunder. Vlasta and her horse had no more need to find shelter; the ray had struck them both with its electric shock.

It happened by chance that the former admirer of the beautiful countess rode onto his fields after the storm had passed to see what damage had been done; and he rode by the place where the wild huntress and her horse lay buried – and thus was the first to see the fulfillment of the terrible curse that the smith's wife had put on the cruel woman.

January 18, 2022

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Coloured Version © 2022, Paul Karl Moeller

„— und nun ging die Hekjagd los.“

“ . . . and thus began this particular kind of hunt”

[hunting with dogs]

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The Dangerous Epigramme

Translator's Introduction

The original German title of the present rendition into English was “*Das gefährliche Epigramm*”.

The theme here is a sort of historical fiction in which the question of diplomacy is of utmost importance.

The references to a web-based encyclopedia are for the convenience of those persons more interested historical events than in the writing of Sacher-Masoch.

The Dangerous Epigramme

Kaunitz¹⁵⁰ returned to Vienna from Paris, now that the alliance¹⁵¹ between Louis XV¹⁵² and Maria Theresa¹⁵³ against Frederick the Great¹⁵⁴ was in the bag. He had engaged in intrigue for such a long time at the French Court that his plan was successful and that the almighty Pompadour¹⁵⁵ had been caught in his web.

Maria Theresa received the adroit diplomat with the greatest delight, and thanked him for the services rendered, according to her manner - in a simple, heartfelt way. Kaunitz, however, did not share this joy, and with a serious furrow upon his forehead which was otherwise so unwrinkled, he stated, “Your Majesty, as long as the Czarina Elizabeth of Russia¹⁵⁶ does not join the alliance, we have accomplished next to nothing.”

“He is right,” replied Maria Theresa thoughtfully. “He, Kaunitz, must also go to Petersburg,¹⁵⁷ and pursue the matter there. He is so clever, Kaunitz, he was able to deal

¹⁵⁰ Wenzel Anton, Prince of Kaunitz-Rietberg,

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wenzel_Anton,_Prince_of_Kaunitz-Rietberg

¹⁵¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diplomatic_Revolution#First_Treaty_of_Versailles

¹⁵² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XV

¹⁵³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_Theresa

¹⁵⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_the_Great

¹⁵⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diplomatic_Revolution#First_Treaty_of_Versailles, and

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madame_de_Pompadour

¹⁵⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_of_Russia

¹⁵⁷ Modern day St. Petersburg, which was also the original name of that city.

with that person, Pompadour, so that he should also be able to win the Czarina for our designs.”¹⁵⁸

“Her Majesty is mistaken,” was the answer given by the skillful statesman, “I am not the man who will accomplish anything at the Petersburg Court.”

“And why not?” asked the astonished empress.

“May it please her majesty to name another emissary for this mission,” said Kaunitz with a sly smile, “an emissary, who above all is clever, but also – good-looking.”

For a while the empress looked at her first minister fixedly, then she blushed somewhat, and stated with impatience, “One notices of him, Kaunitz, that he comes from Paris. He has well lost all decorum and belief at that loose, French Court? That which was said about the Czarina surely was something that disreputable woman, that Pompadour, persuaded him of?”

Kaunitz almost laughed out loud at the naiveté of his equally beautiful and virtuous monarch, but no one knew better than him how to maintain his composure, and he had his face take a very serious – almost sad – expression, as if he felt his error.

“Oh, now, may he not take it so seriously, Kaunitz,” said Maria Theresa benevolently, “and if he does not want to go to Petersburg, then let him provide for a suitable replacement.”

Kaunitz was fully satisfied with the authority that the empress had given to him. In order to find the right man, he visited more than the usual number of the houses of the Viennese aristocracy, and turned his usually very solitary palace into the meeting place of the distinguished men of the city.

In this manner, he soon found what he needed. There was a large, handsome Walloon, a captain of grenadiers. Baron de Bie was of a good but poor family, and had sufficient presence of mind to carry out the assignment entrusted to him. Kaunitz swiftly won him over for his plan, gave him instructions, and sent him to Russia richly provided with money and all other prerequisites.

¹⁵⁸ The stilted style reflects the usage of the Austrian German. This indirect form of address indicated deference: https://www.uni-due.de/ELE/Address_Terms.pdf

It was as a distinguished private gentleman that Baron de Bie landed one day in Petersburg; and as a result of his distinguished recommendations, he immediately found admittance at both the courts and in other distinguished circles.

When he was presented to the Czarina, this woman, as beautiful as frivolous and amorous, received him graciously, and even spoke to the good-looking Belgian for more time than was in effect allowed by strict etiquette.

The Russian Court was full of amorous intrigue. The Czarina, herself never without suitors, promoted these intrigues with all kinds of festivities which she used to give, and at which things sometimes became rather fantastic. For her friends, she often arranged the so-called “reserved balls.”¹⁵⁹

Should Elizabeth favour one of the nobles, and if his position was such that it would not otherwise be easy to approach him, she always arranged one of these dances at which odd masquerades gave her the opportunity that had to let her carry out her plans.

Baron de Bie repeatedly saw the Czarina at official balls, but he dared not approach her, although she noticeably enough looked in his direction. Then one day he received an invitation to one of the reserved dances in the halls of the Czarina.

The invitation was followed by a perfumed billet-doux which informed him that a high-ranking lady would approach him at the ball, and that it would be left to his perspicacity to guess who it was who had given him such a distinction.

In these invitations, it was usual to indicate the manner of dress in which one was to appear. This time it was determined that men would come dressed as women, and vice versa.

For the strongly-built Walloon, it was no mean task to find a feminine costume in which he would look good and not have to fear becoming a laughing-stock. In the latter case, all would be lost with the Czarina, for it was she who had sent that letter full of promise to him – he did not doubt that for a moment. After thinking about it for quite some time, he decided to present himself dressed up as a nun. In the long and ample robes of one of these women, he could best hope to have a good appearance.

¹⁵⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_of_Russia#Court – final paragraph.

And the solution was a good one. Baron de Bie was hardly twenty-four years old, and had a full, round face framed by light, blond locks which would appear to be that of a woman under the white wimple, while the full, billowy white robe reaching to the ground would hide his form, which was altogether too muscular for that of a feminine one; and thus only the fine, slender outlines of his body would remain visible. Delighted by this successful costuming idea, he stepped into the carriage and drove to the ball.¹⁶⁰

He found almost all the invitees already gathered there. The originality of his costume aroused attention, and it was well-known among the attendees for what purpose he had been included as a guest here; or rather, that it was the Czarina herself who had arranged this festivity only on his account. However, no one let him notice this, and everyone acted as if his presence were the most natural thing in the world.

Baron de Bie, who had already moved in circles of good society, was amazed at the audacity of some of the costumes that both gentlemen as well as ladies permitted themselves, and at the shocking behaviour found in the rooms of the Czarina. And all were fair to behold – both men and women. For him, it was truly a feast for the eyes to go through the salons and to see and admire the many creations, in part consisting of historical and fantastical costumes.

Shortly before midnight, all eyes directed themselves to a lovely apparition. A Bacchus covered in vine leaves strode proudly and with high spirits through the salon. A small half-mask¹⁶¹ covered the top part of the face and revealed only the round chin and the dearest mouth, which displayed a roguish smile. The beautiful, soft form betrayed that it was a woman.

It was the Czarina, and all those present stepped back in order to allow the prettified Bacchus passage. She sought out the Baron de Bie, and as she saw him, stepped towards him with a comical bow, and said:

“Would you, dear sister, without fearing for the health of your soul, like to have a dance with me?”

The Belgian, who could not hide a certain excitement at the approach of the immediately-recognized Czarina, was happy that a dance would give him the opportunity to compose himself and to prepare himself for his serious mission.

¹⁶⁰ This complete non-sequitur is found in the original.

¹⁶¹ Such as worn at the Venetian carnival.

It was a strange sight to see how the fantastic Bacchus danced with the serious nun, and a cheerful murmur went through the gathered party-goers.

After the dance, Bacchus took the nun in his arm and led her to a bower in which none should dare to enter save him whom the Czarina pleased to distinguish with this honour.

“How do you like the Czarina?” asked Elizabeth, taking her place in the bower, indicating a place at her feet for the baron, and going directly towards her goal.

“The question, dear Bacchus,” replied de Bie, “is best answered if I tell you, that it is on account of your Czarina that I have left my home country and my army.”

“Why?” asked the Czarina with curiosity.

“Because I have heard of her wonderful beauty, and did not want to believe of it, until I was convinced of it with my own eyes.”

“And so?” asked the Czarina, feeling flattered.

“And so, since I have seen her,” answered the Baron, “I do know that the reputation of her beauty, although it has been spread throughout the world, hardly does justice to the wonderful charm of this uncommon woman.”

“But your Empress Maria Theresa is indeed herself an uncommonly beautiful lady,” said Elizabeth, and looked at him expectantly.

“Yes,” he replied, “Maria Theresa is beautiful, but it is a sterile beauty, such as that of a statue. She covers herself with her virtue as if it were a cloak of ice and snow – instead of warming one; she emits coldness to everyone who nears her. She has frightened away her own husband with her rough morality; while the Czarina Elizabeth is not only beautiful, but merciful, and climbs down from her heights to us poor mortals like a goddess to treat us with gracious smiles; believe me, that is the greatest attraction which she possesses – and so I do not understand how there can be people who dare to mock this splendid and adorable woman.

“Who dares to do that?” asked Elizabeth, agitated.

“Indeed, it is no secret that Frederick the Great writes malicious epigrammes about her,” answered the baron calmly.¹⁶²

The Czarina paled under her mask, and an unpleasant line formed at the side of her red mouth.

Only a few more words were exchanged with him, and then she left the bower.

The Belgian did not quite know whether his stratagem had worked or not. Somewhat worried about this, he wanted to leave the ball while he was in one of the antechambers, when a person with a woman’s mask invited him to follow. Quickly they strode through several rooms until they came to a small jib door, opened by the person accompanying him with a key which she carried with her, invited him to enter, and then carefully locked up again.¹⁶³

At the beginning the baron found himself in a narrow, totally dark room, then he finally became aware of a portière in front of him; as he opened it, he suddenly found himself in the presence of the Czarina.

The beautiful woman was dressed in a most attractive robe for the night, and the baron would not have said too much, if he had spoken of her wonderful charms. In an elegant fur-lined nightdress of red damask, tastefully lined with soft fox fur, she was reclining on a small divan and graciously smiling, and invited the respectfully entering baron to kiss her small hand.

“Do you know, dear baron,” she asked cheerfully, “who the Bacchus was, with whom you conversed this evening?”

“In truth, no, Your Majesty,” replied the man, with an expression as if he anticipated something dreadful.

“You did not know him?”

“Have mercy, Your Majesty,” begged the baron, kneeling down.

¹⁶² No citation found to confirm this. Addendum of January 19, 2022: Frederick the Great did write epigrammes, but none has been found about Catherine, except in Leopold Ritter von Sacher-Masoch, *Die Epigramme Friedrich des Großen*, the second volume of *Kaunitz: Kultur-Historisches Roman*, [Prague, Fr. Aug. Gredner, 1865], p. 209: books.google.com/books?id=eb9BE3wqB0IC&pg=PA209. The work also mentions “Pelz” or “fur” or a related “skin” six times.

¹⁶³ This sentence is illogical in the original, e.g., it literally says that “she” locked the door “while” she invited him to enter. Furthermore, we are left wondering whether it was a “he” or a “she”.

“You are already forgiven, my dear,” replied the Czarina, “but advise me, how shall I punish the King of Prussia for his maliciousness?”

The baron acted as if he were thinking about a punishment. After a while, he lifted up his head and said, “I think that there would be no more fitting punishment for him than the acceptance by Your Majesty of joining the alliance that France and Austria have already made against him.”

“Oh, yes, you are right,” stated Elizabeth, relieved, “but how shall I thank you for having opened my eyes?”

“The sight of Your Majesty is the sweetest payment for my humble service,” replied the shrewd Walloon humbly.

The Czarina was so merciful, that she granted this favour for a full two hours. — —
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The next day, she had the Austrian envoy sent to her, and she let him know that she was ready to join the alliance of Austria and France against Frederick the Great, and that the envoy should do all that was necessary so that this business would be concluded as quickly as possible. At the end of this conference she also told the envoy that as a small *quid pro quo*, she was asking Maria Theresa to leave the baron fully with her.

The end of the conference made the envoy worried about the welfare of the baron. Had he become guilty of some infraction? The high and the mighty of Russia were accustomed not to fuss too much about those who had caused them some unpleasantness. Barely had he arrived home, when he asked the baron to see him, and when the latter came, he addressed him in the following words; “Oh, unfortunate man, what have you done? Russia demands of Austria that you be delivered to her.”

“Russia?” asked de Bie calmly. “Whom do you understand by Russia?”

“Who else but the Czarina Elizabeth?” replied the envoy, still upset.

The baron broke out in cheerful laughter. “Don’t worry in the least about me, the Czarina means well with me.”

“As you wish,” answered the envoy somewhat hurt, “I have warned you.”

¹⁶⁴ Translated literally, including the dashes.

The Empress Maria Theresa was quickly ready to deliver the baron to his envious fate.

For a year he played an important role at the Petersburg Court, and then the Czarina let him know that he could stay where it pleased him to do so. The baron took the hint, and pleased with his success, had his baggage packed. So that the departure would not be too hard on him, the Czarina conferred upon him the rank of general, and gave him a regiment to command. So it was that de Bie returned to Vienna with Titles and medals, but also furnished with diamonds and rubies.

January 3, 2022

Translation © 2022, Paul Karl Moeller

All web-references, unless otherwise indicated, accessed January 3, 2022.

A Night in Paradise

Translator's Introduction

Our title is translated literally from “*Eine Nacht im Paradiese*” and is one of the three stories where men dally with Turkish women, in addition to “The Titled Turkish Lady, or the Begum”, and “His Rival's Slave”.

The flow of events related in this story is quite illogical – so this tale must be considered to be one of pure fantasy.

The spelling of Bredow has been changed to Bredov.

Continues on next page.

...: *Good madam, let me see your face.*

*Olivia: Have you any commission from your lord to negotiate with my face? You are now out of your text: but we will draw the curtain, and show you the picture. Look, you, sir, such a one I was this present: is't not well done? [Unveiling]*¹⁶⁵

A Night in Paradise

Lieutenant Bredov was the most handsome man in his regiment. He had grown tall and slender, strong and elegant at the same time; with brown hair and beard, with the soft rosy complexion of a girl, big fiery eyes and the most elegant manners, having everything which could please a woman: they liked him too, but it was precisely the women who were his misfortune.

At the age of twenty-one, he had fought his first duel, and it ended so badly, that he had to flee. He had left his opponent dead on the ground. The latter had been the favourite of the regiment's commander, who, in turn, was a favourite of the king. Under such circumstances, he could count on receiving no mercy: he had to take flight. A woman was responsible for the entire story, and she was neither young nor beautiful, but in compensation, quite vain, without being able to stand the fact that the youngest – and what is more – the most handsome man of the regiment did not pay any attention to her: the major's wife. In revenge, she incited some older comrades who had long been jealous of the young lieutenant's success upon him, and the consequence was a duel.

Bredov had enough capital to be able to live for a few years at his own expense. He got on board a ship and went to Turkey.

The peculiar life in the Orient held a strange attraction for him, although he only had the opportunity to watch it from the street. A sweet magic exercised itself upon him, especially that emanating from the women, when they stared at him with glowing eyes from their non-transparent white veils. All day he whiled away his time in the streets and was happy when he saw these mystical apparitions walk or drive by him. Often he

¹⁶⁵ Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night, Or What You Will*, Intro. By Henry N. Hudson, Act I, Scene 5, [Boston: Ginn & Co., 1887], p. 52. books.google.com/books?id=R14VAAAAYAAJ, accessed February 9, 2022; Heine, "Shakespeare's Mädchen und Frauen" (op. cit.): "Olivia", p. 471.

followed them until they disappeared into their homes, although he always did this from a distance, in order not to attract the attention of the accompanying slaves.

Thus he went strolling one day, without any plan, into a forest of plane trees on banks of the Bosphorus, when a nicely-built galley with a richly-gilt keel came by, rolling on the waves. Under a tent of red damask, the curtains of which were held in place by golden loops and tassels, several Turkish women were seated in rich clothing and heavily veiled. One of them, who was sitting on a somewhat higher seat, and who seemed to be the most distinguished of the group, looked towards the bank from time to time.

Bredov remained standing and looked at her inquisitively. The vessel came even closer, very near to the bank, and it seemed to the young man as if he were the object of attention, because he looked around repeatedly, but there were neither persons nor objects in the vicinity who or which could have been worthy of such conspicuous observation; therefore it must have been intended for him. As the galley was finally opposite him, he even believed for a moment that it would stop, but it moved on, and sighing, he followed it with his eyes for as long as it was within sight.

When several hours later Bredov returned to his lodgings, it was already dark. He had to pass a small lonely alley when he was suddenly held back by a bony hand, and as he looked around, an old Turkish woman, who grinned at him amiably through a toothless mouth, stood in front of him.

“Come along,” she said to him in Italian, “I want to entrust you with a sweet secret.”

Bredov, who had already been waiting for an adventure for a long time, was immediately ready to follow the old woman. She led him through many streets and alleys, and into an old, ruined house and then into a miserable, dirty room lit with a bad-smelling little lamp. She asked him to take a seat on a small chair, and squatted down on the ground beside him.

“If you have the courage,” she whispered quietly into his ear, “then you could call the most beautiful women in the world your own.”

“How can I prove to you, that I have the courage?” asked Bredov, who was not a little excited about the adventure.

“If you are not afraid of the danger which is connected with the possession of her,” announced the old lady.

“If this woman truly is as beautiful as you say, I will go through hell for her.” The old woman nodded her ugly head in satisfaction.

“Come again tomorrow at this same time to this same place,” she said, “I will wait for you and lead you to her.”

When the young man was gone, the door to an adjoining room opened, and in came a tall, slender woman in a white, gold-sewn burnoose, with a heavily-concealed head. Humbly, the old woman crawled towards her, the tall lady threw a gold piece in front of her feet which the former picked up with a broad grin, pressed it to her withered lips, and then she was ordered to lead through a proud gesture of the tall one’s hand. The old woman obeyed and led her through a low back door and onto the wide canal which flowed through the back part of the house. The galley was docked there, they boarded it, and it sailed off at the command of the younger lady.

That night Bredov did not sleep at all, and the following day, he could hardly wait for the hour of his rendezvous. When darkness eventually fell, he had not a little difficulty in finding the house where the raggedly-dressed woman awaited him.

“Come, my darling,” she said, and took him by the hand through a small, evil-smelling yard into the back building and to the little gate through which the woman had left yesterday. For a moment the young man almost felt the desire to give up the adventure, as he was so much nauseated by this messenger of love; but curiosity was more powerful, and therefore he followed her. Before she unlocked the door, she wanted to bind his hands, but he energetically protested, and it was only with effort that she could get him to agree to let a small sack be pulled over his head. Now she unlocked the little door and helped him into a rowing-boat provided with comfortable, soft cushions upon which he was urged to sit.

For a while, they rowed away on the water; then a stop was made: the two of them disembarked, and again the man felt the small, shrivelled hand of the old woman, who led him over steps, through court-yards and hall-ways. Then a foot stepped onto a soft carpet, and bright light penetrated the linen of his sack.

When this was removed from his head, he found himself in a very large, but magnificently appointed Turkish lady’s bed-chamber. Only after a while, when his eyes had accustomed themselves to the many richly-gilt candlesticks did he notice a heavily-veiled woman on a low ottoman in a small depression of the room.

She lay proudly and gracefully at the same time, with stretched-out legs on the white cushions, the head bent forward somewhat, as if to see better, and supported by a nice white arm. The slender although roly body was wrapped in a caftan of yellow damask lined with ermine, which gave her the aspect of a sultana. The nice feet, the soft flesh of which shone through the finely pierced silk stockings were stuck into small, gold-sewn slippers. The neck and arms were bare and richly decorated with pearls and jewels. But all this glitter was outdone by the unearthly fire that flashed out of the eyes of this woman, and filled Bredov – who up to now was only used to the soft blue eyes of the German ladies – with fear and rapture.

For a while he stood there, amazed, almost dazed, then for the first time he dared to approach the enchanting vision. The beautiful woman pointed with a finger to a cushion which lay in front of her ottoman, and he obediently sat down on it. A sweet mind-muddling fragrance surrounded the tempting woman and transported Bredov into a curiously excited state.

“You are very courageous,” she said with a somewhat mournful voice, which nevertheless had a wonderful mellowness, “but this is not enough. You must also be able to deny yourself; I can only give you one night – are you satisfied with that?”

“Before I answer, let me see your face” replied Bredov, to whom the whole situation seemed to be a nice dream.

With a swift and single movement, she had whisked the veil away, and the young man stared with bated breath at the woman’s countenance, which was of such a fairy-tale beauty, that only a poet or an artist would have been able to depict it. For a long time, he found no words, and then he threw his own face to the ground and stammered, “You can do with me as you wish.”

A diabolical smile came over the face of the beautiful woman. She lifted herself up slowly, put on her veil again, and as he in his euphoria marveled at the appealing beauty of her body, she struck a silver chime which stood on the table with a small hammer. Immediately several slaves entered, carrying in a delicious meal. She filled a crystal bowl with a sweet wine and extended it to Bredov. He emptied it, and felt fire in his veins. Then rang out a wonderful, invisible music, and in the depths of the room a large curtain opened from its middle, and Bredov glanced into an enchantingly lit salon, in which half-naked,

fantastically made-up girls presented a curious dance. With delighted eyes he stared at this treasury of youth, beauty, and charm.

He still thought he was dreaming when a warm, soft hand lay upon his, and looking up, he saw the languishing, love-glowing glance of the beautiful woman who was beside him.

Again she extended her hand and struck the chime, and as if by magic, the music stopped, and the curtain closed. With trembling hands Bredov himself ripped the veil from the face of the wonderful woman and covered her sweet body with fiery kisses. — — — —

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After a night of total revelry, a soft slumber had set itself upon the eyes of the happy woman, out of which she was awakened by the soft knocking on the outer door. Shivering with cold, the beautiful Turk pulled the ermine caftan over her bare breast and got up and turned, with the points of her slippers towards Bredov, who was still sleeping at her feet. He opened his eyes, looked around – astonished – seized the foot which was still on his shoulder, and pressed his lips to it. She, however, withdrew it. “Enough,” she said, “we are now separated – for all time.”

He was taken aback. “Impossible,” he called out, hugging her passionately; “you cannot be serious.”

“Have you forgotten my conditions?” she asked, “I could only give you a single night.”

“Better to die, than never to see you again,” shouted Bredov, embracing the beautiful woman convulsively, as in a delirium.

“Die?” she asked, and again the malicious smile deformed the voluptuous mouth. “Your wish is to be granted.”

He looked at her in shock, “You want to kill me. Just where am I?”

“At the yellow Palace,” she replied, and looked at him inquisitively.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ The word for “kisses” is followed by these dashes in the original text.

¹⁶⁷ Although the story is fictitious, “In the yellow Palace”, “*Im gelben Palast*”, the way this is written in German is strange. If it is the name of the palace, the adjective should have been capitalized. To the question of the existence of such a palace in Turkey, search results are not conclusive. One was found in

Deathly pallor came over his face, and shuddering he mumbled: “You are the Sultana Esma?”¹⁶⁸

She nodded.

Now he knew that he had to die. Esma killed all her lovers. He had heard of her, right after he had come to Constantinople, and the call of her beauty and cruelty had provoked his curiosity and excited his fantasies. He had always wished to know about the secret of the yellow palace; that this wish was to be so unexpectedly fulfilled, he would never have believed.

Caught by surprise and stunned, he stood there and looked at the woman, for whose short possession he was now to pay for with his life. Esma had leaned back again and tiredly closed her eyes; he devoured the beautiful body with his eyes and with delight he remembered the blissful hours that he had just enjoyed with her. The thought of having revelled in the Eden of Voluptuousness – once and nevermore – put him into a kind of frenzy.

“If I have to die,” he shouted, totally beside himself, “for this night in Paradise, then I want to die in front of you, want to see you until my lights go out.”¹⁶⁹ This one last wish you must grant me.

Esma smiled and nodded in agreement with her pretty head.

For the third time, she struck the chime; two slaves stepped in, one held a noose of red silk in his hands. Tired and drowsy,¹⁷⁰ she made a gesture, and in the next moment,

John Reid, *Turkey and the Turks: Being the Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, [London: Robert Tyas, 1840], p. 153: “The appearance of the Bosphorus, from the Yellow Palace of the sultan, to Scutari ...”; books.google.com/books?id=iicTqiWpcfsC&pg=PA153. The reference here to Scutari is not clear either, as it was the former name of an Albanian locality, which is not on the Bosphorus. A reference in German was found in the *Bayreuter Zeitung*, 5 March 1855, p. 238, which places it in the Asiatic part of the Bosphorus: books.google.com/books?id=agVEAAAACAAJ&pg=PA238. Another in German is from the *Münchener politische Zeitung*, 15 August, 1839, p. 1167: books.google.com/books?id=DDtEAAAACAAJ&pg=PA1167. It also mentions the Asian side. Such as the German was written, one would assume that only one yellow palace existed in the city of the Sultana Esma, and that it could have been known by another name.

¹⁶⁸ *Wikipedia* lists 3 persons of this name, one was something of a feminist, and there were rumours about “the colourful life” of another, but none match the woman of this story: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esma_Sultan

¹⁶⁹ Changed from the more literal, “until my last look”.

¹⁷⁰ Redundancy of the original text.

before Bredov knew what was happening, the noose was around his neck, and only a few moments later, he was strangled.

* * * *

Almost a year had passed since then. The chambers of the yellow palace shone in a sea of light. Esma lay on her ottoman, richly covered with jewels, and waited for the arrival of her husband, the admiral, whom she had not seen in more than two years, because he had been sent from the Sublime Porte¹⁷¹ to Arabia.

She was one of the younger princesses, and according to custom, married to one of the higher dignitaries, but her rank was such that even her husband would have to approach with the greatest reverence. Although considerably older than she was, he loved her immensely and was unhappy when he was sent to Arabia.

The admiral had left a trusted friend behind in Constantinople, to whom he had entrusted his young wife, and had asked him to watch over her. But Esma, bothered by this attention, knew how to cleverly lock the friend out of the house. In spite of this, the secrets of the yellow palace did not remain concealed from him, and when the spouse approached, the friend considered it his duty to have the admiral informed about the state of things, even before the faithless wife was to be seen. With rage and jealousy in his heart, the admiral nevertheless approached his wife humbly – like a slave – his arms lay on his breast, in front of her. Esma received him with a sweet smile and promising glances. Flatteringly, she asked him how the weather was on his way home.

“The Bosphorus is choppy,” answered her spouse, “obviously it has been some time since she has last received a victim.”

“What do you mean by that?” asked Esma, astounded and uneasy.

“You should well know,” he replied, “when it was you that brought her the most victims.” With difficulty, he raised his breast, and his eyes lit up uncannily. Esma saw him reaching for something by his belt. Deathly pallor seized her; she wanted to flee, but before she had even taken a step, the dagger had penetrated her breast from behind.

The admiral sat by the corpse of his wife all night, yielding to the magic of her wonderful beauty one last time, and always admiring her charms anew. But as the body

¹⁷¹ Government Palace of the Ottoman Empire.

grew cold, he covered the sweet body with kisses and his tears mixed with her blood. When it became day, he had her body sewn into a sack and thrown into the sea.¹⁷²

People related that Sultana Esma had suffered an accident during a nocturnal ride, and had found her death in the waves of the Bosphorus.

January 20, 2022

Translation © 2022, Paul Karl Moeller

All web-references, unless otherwise indicated, accessed January 20, 2022.

Barbara Pagadin

Translator's Introduction

One may get the feeling that in the following story, its heroine is the prototype of Sacher-Masoch's liberated woman. That Wanda Sacher-Masoch was not of a low-class family, and was married to a man of noble lineage, and that her heroine was a person fighting against the established aristocratic order is irrelevant – even as this is being translated, elites are giving power to certain movements, with the aim of changing governments, or at least society, with the aim of creating something akin to the world that this tale's champion had in mind – but to what degree, remains to be seen.

The original title in German is “*Warwara Pagadin: Ein russisches Sittenbild*”. The first name has been translated by others as Varvara, which is the pronunciation of the German. “Warwara” has been changed to Barbara for 3 reasons: (1) it is easier to pronounce; (2) the German “w” is pronounced as “v”, but this letter, in Russian, looks exactly like out “B”, so, the word which sounds like Varvara is written “Барвара” in

¹⁷² (1): The Bosphorus is a strait, not a sea. (2) Searching for books, using “Throwing bodies into the Bosphorus” on the Internet will turn up references to what the admiral did.

Russian, with the “p” being the “r” of the Greek letter rho: ρ; and (3), it is in fact the correct translation.¹⁷³

This translator feels that this is the most logically written of Sacher-Masoch’s output, although Nadia Dennis [*footnote 174*] disagrees.

A number of other names have also been modified for the sake of more accurate pronunciation: These are: Simon Pultovsky for Semen Pultowski (misspelt at one point as Plutowski in the original),¹⁷⁴ Martha Ivanovna for Marfa Iwanowna, Timolnitch for Timolnitsch, and Pavlovitch Halikov for Pavlovitch Halikoff.

In order to be historically accurate, this translation uses the term “the Ukraine” and “Kiev” rather than “Ukraine” and “Kyiv”.

A Russian translation has been found on the Web, which of course can be translated through Google.¹⁷⁵

Up until recent times – how recent is difficult to declare - Barbara Pagadin would have been an anti-hero(ine), nothing more than an assassin. She would, of course, have had her admirers among fringe political groups. The police superintendent is no hero either – any good that he did was in self-interest.

Barbara Pagadin

Just as the best thoughts come out better in silence, so a passion develops more easily in limited circumstances than in the middle of the boisterous currents of life. It was thus that Barbara Pagadin got to know the student Simon Pultovsky¹⁷⁶ in a village lying off a military road in the Ukraine; and they came to love one another dearly forever. Barbara was the daughter of a small tenant-farmer. Through a friend who studied medicine in Kiev

¹⁷³ <https://forum.wordreference.com/threads/barbara-%D0%92%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B0.1397447/>

¹⁷⁴ Page 131 of the edition used, see the “Translator’s Introduction” or the illustration of the title page.

¹⁷⁵ Леопольд захер-мазох. *варвара погодина*. перевод Nadia Dennis – <https://proza.ru/2016/09/15/2141>, the translation seen at: https://proza.ru.translate.google/2016/09/15/2141?_x_tr_sl=ru&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=es&_x_tr_pto=sc. Notice that the translator attributed the work to Leopold, not to Wanda.

¹⁷⁶ “Plutowski”, by mistake, in the original German, see the “Translator’s Introduction” to this article.

and who visited her parents from time to time, she was indoctrinated with a love of freedom – and together with this, a hatred of tyranny, of czarism; and a desire to have oneself compare with men as regards education and work.¹⁷⁷ Barbara studied and read untiringly, and immediately began to make use of her studies. She called herself a nihilist, she belonged to that great, brave party which sought to destroy everything which was standing in Russia, and until that was achieved, she was content to improve the natural intelligence of the people, to spread knowledge among them, and to destroy that superstition which made them a useful herd of slaves to the despotism of the State and the Church.

She was certainly still so much a woman that the transformation of the world had to begin with her, with her external appearance, but surely it was not vanity which directed the hand of that beautiful woman when she cut off the abundant, blond hair which surrounded her like a golden cloak when she let it hang down; and indeed, she looked like a young theologian afterwards, rather than a heart-winning love-goddess. Now she only went around in high boots, an unadorned skirt, a simple jacket, and a round men's hat; the living picture of a modern Amazon disdaining all womanly coquettish desire to please. She had perused enough medical texts in order to be able to act with success as a merciful nurse within the village itself, and in the district for several miles around it, where no doctor was to be found; but this was not enough for her. She set up a elementary school in her father's house, in which she taught not only children, but also adults; she taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, and furthermore explained the essential concepts of the cosmic system, the laws of nature, the earth and its inhabitants, as well as the lot of humanity. Additionally, she wrote for journals, and the peasants gave her tips on agriculture and cattle-breeding. She sat in the saddle like a man, went through the entire region, and soon was talked about in all circles.

In the middle of this feverish activity she met Simon Pultovsky, who studied chemistry in Kiev, at the house of his father – he was a toll-collector – where he spent his Easter holidays. They began to shoot at targets with pistols, to fight with rapiers, and thus ended up by loving one another. With all the sobriety of their effort and their goals, there yet lived in them a glowing enthusiasm for all that was good and noble, and furthermore,

¹⁷⁷ A not much better translation of the last words, with a more feminist slant, would be: "[a hatred of ...] the pressure to stand at a man's side through education and work." The Russian translation mentioned two footnotes above, does not mention "man". This translator's doubt is if "*sich dem Manne durch Bildung und Arbeit an die Seite zu stellen*" has an idiomatic component – *an die Seite zu stellen* – or not. This footnoted translation is the one similar to what an on-line translation provides. The idea of comparison comes from the dictionary used – an adequate reference book, but not complete.

they were children of nature, and had something of the wildness of the Little Russian race inside them. Their love, then, was not one of tastes, not one of the sensitive pleasing of oneself, and not one of gushing happiness under the moonlight, and least of all, not a frivolous game; there was something elementary in their kind of feeling.

Simon drove back to Kiev to continue his studies, but spent his holiday months at his parent's house, and his ties to the brave, energetic girl closed tighter and grew more intimate day by day. Simon Pultovsky also belonged to the Russian revolutionary party, was in the know of several plots, and had repeatedly been involved in certain undertakings of more or less daring.

When the autumn recommencement of studies recalled him to Kiev, he participated in a mass demonstration, and was arrested together with several other students.

Barbara Pagadin found that out in the newspaper – she read the relevant article twice without betraying the least agitation; but when she had folded up the newspaper and laid it aside, she had already taken a decision. She packed her things in a small suitcase, got on her father's britzka which was pulled by a span of two small thin horses, rode to the nearest train station, and was in Kiev the next morning.

What she was looking for there, what she wanted, she would not even have been able to explain to herself, but she felt that she was necessary here. It was a secret, fatal pull which drove her on.

She rented a room at the home of an officer's widow, unpacked, and the foremost thing she then looked for was work. On the first day she had already found a position in a small but elegant shop in which gloves and ties were sold. Had Barbara been somewhat experienced, then not only some things, but everything in the shop would have seemed suspicious to her: the furnished back room with refined luxury, the musk-perfumed mistress of the shop, Martha Ivanovna, dressed in rustling silk, the pretty décolletée adorned girls, the elegant gentlemen who flirted and exchanged puzzling glances with them; but she was a simple country girl, of this she understood nothing – she gave the gentlemen short, polite answers, and calmly sold her gloves and neckerchiefs.

At night, she prowled around the police building and tried to discover her lover behind the barred windows.

One evening, when there was no one in the shop anymore, excepting Martha Ivanovna and Barbara,¹⁷⁸ the latter kept from leaving under some pretext; a handsome man, wrapped in a costly fur, suddenly stepped in, and immediately directed the fascinating gaze of his fine grey eyes upon Barbara.¹⁷⁹

“What are you still requesting at such a late hour, Seraph Pavlovitch?” began to say Martha Ivanovna, with a deep bow.

“A pair of gloves,” answered the arrival slowly. Barbara placed the box in front of him, and Martha Ivanovna exchanged some words with him in a quiet voice.

“So, you are from the country, miss?” began the stranger.

“Indeed I am.”

“And how do you like it here in the city?”

“I have found work, I am content.”

“Oh, you are to find even more than this,” continued the stranger, “but who is to blame for that barbarity of having cut off your pretty hair?”

“I, myself.”

“One could almost think that you were a nihilist,” he continued, laughing, “but the women of that class are all so ugly.” Barbara blushed. The stranger had meanwhile chosen a pair of gloves. “It’s been a pleasure meeting you,” he said, “Miss, – miss – ...?”

“Barbara Pagadin.”

“Barbara Pagadin, good-bye.” He took his leave and even slightly tipped his hat. Martha Ivanovna accompanied him to the door, where he quietly said something to her.

¹⁷⁸ Not to be confused with any living or dead person of the same or similar name. A famous Russian nun (Petrozavodsk and Karelia diocese: THE CAPTIVE OF ZAONEZHYE - NUN MARTHA IVANOVNA ROMANOVA, <http://eparhia.karelia.ru/marfaen.htm>) was painted by Fyodor Solntsev: From portrait of the nun Martha Ivanovna: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/fyodor-solntsev/from-portrait-of-the-nun-martha-ivanovna>.

¹⁷⁹ This scene is somewhat reminiscent of Wanda’s encounter with Leopold, as described in her autobiography (in German): *Meine Lebensbeichte. Memoiren* - www.projekt-gutenberg.org/sacherwa/memoiren/chap001.html

“What luck!” called out Martha Ivanovna as the door locked itself behind her. “He likes you; you have conquered him – him – the one in whose presence we all tremble!”

“Of whom are you speaking?”

“Of none other than Seraph Pavlovitch Halikov, Kiev’s police superintendent, who was just here.”

“Why didn’t you tell me that earlier?” said Barbara; and all of a sudden her plan had been conceived.

“Now, now! We are in no hurry!”

“And he likes me, you say?”

“He has fallen in love with you, my little dove, like a madman. I – I know that. But you must dress differently, do your hair differently, and buy, above all, a plait of hair. You look like you just came out of jail. Do you need any money?”

“Thank you, no, but – ”

“Just trust me, my golden darling.”

“Tell him, the police superintendent, that I like him too, do you understand? Exceptionally so.”

“I shall not fail to do so.”

The next evening Halikov already accompanied Barbara home. She still wore her simple clothes, but she had already put on a false plait of hair, and therefore looked much more charming. The police superintendent cast a single glance at her small, inadequate room, and her miserable suitcase and was already orientated.

“A country girl,” he began, “is subject to many temptations in the city; permit me to play the role of Providence. Above all, no longer see Martha Ivanovna, that person has a bad reputation.”

“In what way?”

“She deals in a foul way with innocence and beauty.” Barbara stared at him, she did not understand him. “Furthermore, you cannot stay in this room,” continued Halikov, “if my interest does not cause offence – ”

“I am determined to do all that you say.”

“*Tant mieux!*¹⁸⁰ Let us lose no words over the emptiness of life, just let me handle matters.”

“I imagine that you will, and allow you to do so with utmost thankfulness.”

“It is for me to thank you, Barbara.”

In the course of the following afternoon, Halikov came with a carriage and drove Barbara to her new home, which he had obtained for her and most nicely furnished in true Parisian style. There she also found an old chambermaid, a cook, and a liveried lackey, all ready to serve her; meanwhile, she was expected in the salons of Madame Puthon – the owner of the most distinguished establishment for lady’s fashions, and Alex Timolnitch, the top jeweller in Kiev. Both of them revealed their treasures, and since Barbara showed herself to be somewhat naïve, Halikov, with the help of Madame Puthon selected a charming negligee, as well as several street clothes for her, and on the spot ordered other things; from the jeweller he bought a pair of costly ear pendants, two bracelets, and an expensive necklace affixed with a diamond-studded cross.

That very same evening Barbara Pagadin received a puzzling missive. It read: “You are as clever as courageous. You are trusted. You have taken the right path, not only to free Simon Pultovsky, but also to give our work a great leap forward. Await instructions from us, before you do anything. We will give you any assistance which is in our power.”

Barbara threw the letter into the flames of the fire-place. A few moments later, the police superintendent stepped in.

A week passed by, then two, then another letter came. “Don’t count on being able to save Simon Pultovsky; you may be able to avenge him, but not to give him his freedom.”

Two days later, Barbara Pagadin was served with the death sentence against Seraph Pavlovitch Halikov, the police superintendent of Kiev, and the order to carry it out within

¹⁸⁰ In French in the original: “All the better!”

three days. She hid the dreadful document in her breast, stepped in front of the mirror, fixed her hair, and then ordered her chambermaid to dress her.

When Halikov came to dine with her, he found her on her ottoman, half-lying, half-sitting, *à la* Sarah Bernhard¹⁸¹ in a white silk dressing gown lined with white fox. “You look wonderful,” he began, after he had kissed her hand, “but what cold hands you have!”

“I am afraid.”

“Of what?”

“I don’t know, but I would like to have a dagger.”

“A dagger? Aren’t you served with this?” Halikov pulled out a small revolver, and extended it to her.

“For the moment it will do, but you will bring me a dagger, won’t you?”

“As soon as you wish.”

After supper, Halikov, as usually, fell asleep on the daybed in the dining room. Barbara sat in a small fauteuil by the fire-side, she looked at him constantly, then suddenly she got up, slipped up to him quietly over the soft, fluffy carpet, took hold of the revolver, held it up to his temple, and then discontinued further action. “I just can’t kill him in his sleep,” she thought, “for that would be cowardly.”

In the evening he brought her a dagger, which she stuck in her belt. At tea, she surreptitiously withdrew it, having decided to deliver the mortal blow, but she did not do so.

“I have to pluck up my courage,” she said the next morning, as she woke up in her luxuriant pillows, “for today the great deed has to be carried out.” In vain she waited the police superintendent for lunch; he did not come until evening, but in the best of moods. “You seem so relaxed,” she began, “what’s the reason for this, Seraph Pavlovitch?”

“I made a wonderful catch today,” he replied with a cold laugh, “we have abolished the printing works of the nihilists.”

¹⁸¹ French in the original: *Sarah Bernhard style*: a French actress, 1844-1923

The coincidence was of help to Barbara. "Surely you already have many prisoners," she said calmly, "don't you need more room for them?"

"We just pack them in like sardines," replied Halikov, "there's no thought of giving them any mercy."

"And what's happened to Simon Pultovsky?"

"You know him?"

"He's from the same place that I come from."

"He still lives, although I have already interrogated him severely and repeatedly. Those obstinate fellows who don't want to confess are the ones I like the most."

"How's that? I don't understand."

"Because then I can let them be whipped as much as I please."

Barbara paled, and she suffered a slight shudder. "And you feel no sympathy for these wretches?"

"Sympathy? No," was Halikov's slow answer, as if every word were being laid upon a balance, "I rather feel pleasure, a pleasure similar to the one when you lie upon my chest, Barbara."

"So you hate these nihilists?"

"Not that, others I equally enjoy having under my power." His grey eyes took on the cold shine of those of a tiger. "That – that is a pleasure, when they tremble before me, and fear drives the blood from their cheeks; do you understand that Barbara?"

"Yes, oh, yes," she said more forcefully, with shiny eyes, "I understand that – even I could find pleasure in that. Take me with you, Seraph Pavlovitch, let me be the witness to such a scene."

"Why not?" he said, "I will arrange things so that you see everything, without you yourself being seen."

"Promise?"

"Promise!"

“And can I go with you today even?”

“No, tomorrow, Barbara, in order to give you greater interest and taste in the affair, I’ll have this person whom you know, this Pultovsky, interrogated.

The third day came; the death sentence had to be carried out before midnight. Halikov came at the beginning of dusk from his coach and picked her up. She wrapped herself in a magnificent fur of sable, put a gold-sewn bashlik over her head, and armed herself with the dagger. On the way, Halikov thought about what would give him the most pleasure, to punish his victim himself, or to be witness to the impression that the torments would have on his beautiful wife, who in spite of her luxurious fur in which she was warmly wrapped, was trembling at his side on account of the cold temperature.

He decided on the first course of action. After he had left Barbara in a dark room out of which they could step in unnoticed to a large wall box, and fully see the interrogation room through two small openings; and wrapped comfortably in his own fine fur, he went there – where there was a cold like that of Siberia – sat down at a table upon which a crucifix was set between two candles, and then let Simon Pultovsky be led in.

Barbara paled, and tears filled her eyes as her lover – pale, haggard, and broken – stepped in, wearing threadbare clothes, and shivering from the cold.

“How are you, Simon Pultovsky?”

The wretch shrugged his shoulders.

“Have you thought about, or have you thought the better of it, to confess?”

“I have nothing to confess.”

“Don’t irritate me.”

“It’s all beyond me,” replied Pultovsky sobbing, “but I know about nothing and therefore – ”

“You dog, are you going to talk at once?” Halikov jumped up, pulled down Pultovsky by his hair, and kicked him with his feet. “Confess, confess, at once.”

“I cannot – I am innocent,” moaned the wretch.

“Innocent!” Halikov began to laugh. “Punish him with the knout.”

Police of lesser rank bound him to an iron ring which was fixed into the wall, and one of them began to whip him. A cruel joy lay demonically upon Halikov's handsome face, as he watched the scourging.

When the police superintendent returned home that evening with Barbara, a carriage stood before the door, and two gentlemen walked up and down on the sidewalk. When they reached the top, Barbara asked Halikov to wait, went into her bedroom, and threw off the heavy fur, and quickly slipped on a marten-lined jacket which would not limit her movements in any way, and then she called the police superintendent.

When he stepped in, she was standing in the middle of the room, her arms crossed over her breast. "Do you know who the man is, whom you have just had whipped?"

"Simon Pultovsky."

"He was my lover."

"Oh, had I known that!"

"And then?"

"Then I would have had even more pleasure."

"Don't speak so outrageously, Seraph Pavlovitch, you will no longer mishandle anyone."

"Why not?"

"Read!" She showed him the death sentence, and barely had he scanned it, when she had thrust the dagger through his breast. He fell quietly at her feet, but got up in the next moment and wanted to call for help. But no sound came from his lips, instead, blood poured out of them.

Barbara lifted the dagger again. "Mercy!" mumbled Halikov.

"Did you have mercy on me, on Simon Pavlovsky?" she gave as an answer with an icy laugh. A second stab ended Halikov's life.

As Barbara calmly wiped the blood off the dagger on her victim's clothes, an elegant gentleman, hat on his head, and a revolver in his hand, stepped in.

“Has the deed been accomplished?” he asked.

“Yes.”

“Is he dead?”

“Here – see for yourself.”

He gave Barbara his arm, and while others kept watch with daggers and revolvers the doors and the steps, he hurried down with her, lifted her into the carriage, and closed the door with a bang. The coachman lashed at the horses.

A few moments later, a lot of noise was heard above – the police had forced their way into the house, and found that Halikov had been murdered.

Pavlovsky died in the dungeon. Barbara Pagadin is still being looked for by the Russian police, but she has simply vanished.

January 21, 2022

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All web-references, unless otherwise indicated, accessed January 21, 2022.

The End

Afterword

This text has gone through several checks, which could never be completed in one day. For some reason, upon opening the saved file, the formatting was changed, the page numbers were different, text disappeared or appeared to repeated (when it was not), spaces appeared in unlikely places between paragraphs – it is hoped that this will not be the case as this is converted to the form in which it has been uploaded.

The several readings have impressed the translator with more than the repetitions of the words which were pointed out in the introductory comments. Much more than presenting cases of revenge, Sacher-Masoch had more *thanatos* than *eros* on her mind, if we compare the cases of death with those of kisses. While the latter are found in 15 stories, and death only in 13, the actual number of deaths, whether by pistols, cannon, stabbing,

lashing, burning and stoning, choking, or suicide, we have counted 22 of these, not including “other officials and servants” and the uncounted victims of the Sultana Esma.

Any interest in improving the lot of the lower classes, if it existed, must obviously come from the aristocracy. This conclusion is based on the abodes found in the stories. Nine of these mention palaces, but the description of the one in “Lady Asta” suggests a castle. In two other stories, it may be assumed that there were palaces, because of the nobility involved. Three stories mention manors, and two, “the best hotel”.

Six stories mention whips or scourges, to which we can add bastindados, and the knout. One intended victim saves himself in time by humbling himself, others were slow to do so, and either got died as a result, or were reduced to the slavery.

Two or three facts show us how far from the 20th or 21st Century the texts were. One is the mention of candles – ten times. Sleighs are mentioned twenty times, the same as the number of stories. Horses are mentioned forty-five times, although explicitly only in five stories, to which may be added one more which mentioned a sleigh, and another, which mentioned a carriage. This last word occurs 10 times.

Some of the women enjoyed the attention of men in their environment – mostly this was sought, but in “The Red Manor”, it was inflicted. In “The Dangerous Epigramme”, it was specifically sought by the most important character. In the case of Turkish women, this had to be done discreetly, and as seen in “A Night in Paradise”, there was an attempt to destroy all evidence of any dallying by eliminating the partner of any one-night stand.

There seemed, for a moment, to be some kind of clever construction to the stories, in that both the first and the last of these had men unsuccessfully begging for mercy. In the end, no other pattern was found, but all the repetitions suggested a paucity of ideas, to which we can add “fairy” or “fairy-like” in two stories, going through gates for trysts in two or three tales, and men watching by recesses in walls in two. To recycle so many ideas in so few stories suggests a lack of imagination: Wanda von Sacher-Masoch was limited to what she may have seen, heard, and read from an aristocrat’s point of view.

The first four stories begin with “It was a”, a rather immature format. We believe the author eventually matured as she continued writing, doing her best work when she became closer to describing facts, such as in Barbara Pagadin and in the “Forward”.

The End

